PLAY METER Magazine

VOLUME 23, No. 8 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT/FEC INDUSTRY JULY 1997

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News BULLETIN

NAMCO JOINS WITH PHOTO VEND TO MARKET STICKER CLUB

Namco America has formed a joint venture with Photo Vend International (PVI) to market the latter's instant photo sticker kiosk, *Sticker Club.* "Early U.S. market test results are very strong," said Namco America president Kevin Hayes. "We anticipate selling more than 5,000 units nationwide by Christmas, and project retail sales of these units to exceed $300 million within 18 months."

In addition to targeting high-traffic locations, Namco/PVI will focus on non-traditional locations such as teen clothing and accessory outlets as well as fast food locations and themed restaurants. "The combination of Namco's financial and distribution muscle along with Photo Vend's product development and market know-how make for a strong alliance," added Namco's executive vice president Kenji Hisatsune. Photo Vend recently signed a license agreement with APBI Interactive Kiosks, which holds a United States patent on sticker machines. (For more on that subject, turn to "Coin-Op News.")

REED EXHIBITION COMPANIES ACQUIRES FUN EXPO

Reed Exhibition Companies, a leading organizer of trade and public shows, recently announced its entry into the $2 billion annual family entertainment industry with the acquisition of Fun Expo, slated for Sept. 23-26 at the Sands Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nev. The current management team for the event will be joining Reed Exhibition Companies with Fun Expo founding partner Bailey Beeken being named vice president of the event. The International Association of Family Entertainment Centers will remain the show's sponsor, and association executive director Carole Sjolander expressed enthusiasm over the new development. Other staff members to join Reed include former vice president Michelle Leberfeld as director of industry development and former sales manager Richard Regan and meeting services manager Pamela Kaminsky, both of whom will be responsible for association support, special event organization, and meeting and travel services.

TOTALLY TOUGH

New AAMA president Mike Rudowicz (l) of Konami of America shows Jerry Marcus (c) and Ed Pellegrini, both of Atlas Distributing, the new shooting game *Total Vice* at a hospitality suite held earlier this summer in the Hyatt Regency O'Hare outside of Chicago. The company also debuted the hang gliding simulator *Hang Pilot*.

SNK'S NEO PRINT ATTRACTS NATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION

SNK Corp.'s *Neo Print* photo sticker machine, which recently began shipping, has garnered the attention of several cable television shows and at least one major metropolitan newspaper. The unit was featured on Fox's Home and Family Show, filmed at Universal Studios, on June 23, and company sales representative Jeff Yantz traveled to New York for an appearance on the music video network VH1 that aired June 25.

Neo Print also caught the eye of the "Los Angles Times" which ran a story on the front page of the paper's business section entitled "Photo op has Japanese firms smiling." The story detailed the rise in popularity of photo sticker booths in Japan, and the enthusiastic reception SNK units have received on test in the Los Angeles area. In other SNK news, the company's much awaited Neo 64 system is scheduled for release in Japan this month with the United States market expected to see games late in August or early September. The new system will include several different cabinet configurations including driving, fighting, and shooting. SNK is also implementing plans to move its corporate offices from Torrance to San Jose, Calif.

JCM, DIVERSIFIED SYSTEMS INVOLVED IN PATENT DISPUTE

Japan Cash Machine Co. (JCM) has filed a complaint in a Los Angeles, Calif., federal court against Diversified Systems Inc. (DSI) for alleged infringement of a JCM patent. The complaint claims that DSI's current validation machines include certain portions of JCM's patented technology. JCM is seeking damages from DSI to compensate for the infringement, and the complaint indicates that JCM will request an injunction in order to preclude further acts of infringement.

In an official response to JCM's announcement of the action, DSI president Wayne Bozeman said that while the patent in question covers a specific combination of components, it does not cover the individual elements. Bozeman said DSI uses the elements in a different arrangement. DSI has also filed counterclaims against JCM, requesting the court to declare that its validator does not infringe on the patent and to overturn the patent itself.

"TIME" MAGAZINE VISITS MIDWAY GAMES IN CHICAGO

A story published in "Time" magazine's June 23 issue follows a young video game enthusiast, 12-year-old Fred Ram-

News BULLETIN

sey, on a visit to Midway Games' Chicago-based factory to pitch his own game idea, and along the way discuss the upcoming fall release of *Mortal Kombat 4.* The magazine described *MK4* as a "less cheery" but faster and more impressive 3-D installment in the series thanks to the company's new Zeus chip. The article also noted that Midway will release Mortal Kombat: Mythologies for the home at the same time and raised the issue of increasingly violent game content. "I don't consider it in any way morally questionable," Midway CEO and president Neil Nicastro told the magazine. "It's what our players want." Other games reportedly on tap are Midway's *NFL Blitz* and new pinball games from Bally and Williams.

INTERNET GAMBLING BILL IN LOUISIANA HAS DIRE IMPLICATIONS

A bill passed by the Louisiana Legislature late last month aimed at eliminating Internet gambling could inadvertently outlaw a number of skill tournaments, including darts, video games, and even bowling. The law makes it a crime to conduct or assist in conducting "any game, contest, lottery, or contrivance whereby a person risks the loss of anything of value in order to realize a profit using any computer, computer system, computer network, computer software, or any server accessing the Internet, World Wide Web, or any part thereof." This broadly written bill could even apply to a redemption game or implicate an Internet service provider or phone company. "Obviously what they wanted to do was outlaw Internet casinos," commented Jim Petrangelo of AMA Distributing in Metairie, La. "They needed a bow and arrow but they used a shotgun." At press time, the bill awaited House approval of a last minute amendment.

ICE NAMES COMPLETE COMPONENTS EXCLUSIVE AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR

Ralph Coppola, president of Innovative Concepts in Entertainment (ICE), recently signed an agreement giving Complete Components of Australia exclusive rights to distribute ICE's redemption line in Australia and New Zealand. Coppola first met Complete Components' Allan Clements Nuham and Lawrence Brown at this year's ASI show in Las Vegas. "It was apparent to me immediately that they would be the perfect company to represent our product line in Australia," Coppola said. In conjunction with the signing, ICE launched the release of its newest redemption game, *Ticket's N' Tunes,* which features progressive jackpots similar to *Cyclone.*

ITS TOURNAMENTS BEGIN ON NEW GOLDEN TEE `97 COURSES

Incredible Technologies has released new codes and graphics to operators of the ITS version of *Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee 3-D Golf.* More than 1,700 dedicated tournament units were updated in June with six new and challenging golf courses. Three of the courses are designed for regular play, while the other three have been designed and reserved for tournament play only. These courses have been available in kit form since March and demand for the change has reportedly been overwhelming. "We have worked day and night to complete our new tournament version," said the company's Elaine Ditton.

BITS AND PIECES

☛ Jerry Gordon, formerly of Rowe International and Betson Distributing, has joined Bally's Park Place as its marketing executive. He can be reached at (201)364-0289 or (800)772-7777.

☛ Ted Sloan has been promoted to vice president of sales for Bob's Space Racers. He began as sales manager with the company in 1991.

☛ Dennis Nordman of *Elvira & the Party Monsters* fame has joined the design team at Skee-Ball Inc.

☛ Bay-Tek is now on the Internet, reports the company's Lisa Basten. Look on the World Wide Web (http://www.baytek.com) or send them some e-mail (baytek@sparknet.net).

☛ Namco Europe's Shane Breaks gave out four awards at its international distributor meeting in Grand Cayman: Forbes Trade of the Czech Republic (Best New Distributor), Sonic Amusements of Spain (Best Distributor), Sipem of Italy (Best Distributor), and Nova Games of Germany (Best Overall Distributor). For more on the meeting, look inside this issue of Play Meter.

☛ Partstar celebrated its first anniversary with the unveiling of a new 208-page illustrated catalog which includes new items such as cleaning cards, glass cleaner and vandal mark remover, flybacks and monitor kits, power supplies, and isolation transformers, and some handy cross reference guides. Call 1(800)603-6222 for a copy.

☛ Ramon Tanzer recently joined the staff at Sega Pinball as senior mechanical engineer/game designer. He has held previous positions with Grand Products, Premier Technology, and Mylstar Electronics. He is responsible for such designs as *Waterworld, Strikes `N Spares,* and *Stargate* among others.

☛ Ultrazone has opened a 5,000-square-foot laser tag site in The Hollywood Connection, the first of several FEC complexes Carmike Cinemas plans to open in the next year as part of a joint venture with Wal-Mart previously reported in Play Meter.

☛ Namco Operations Europe recently announced the purchase of The Mean Machine Arcade in Islington, North London, together with an adjoining property which will be transformed into a 20,000-square-foot entertainment complex. "Islington, with its large catchment area, proximity to central London, and good public transportation links, is ideally suited to a progressive development of this kind," said Namco's John Bollom. ▲

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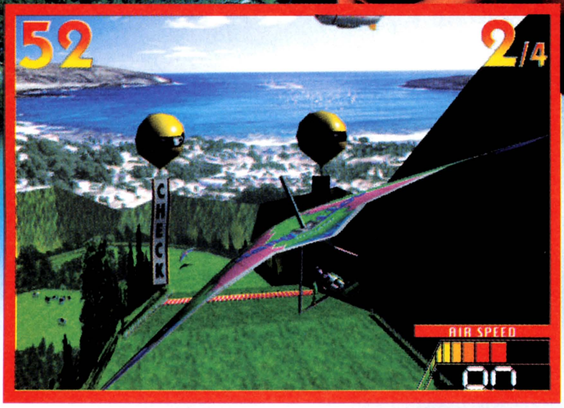
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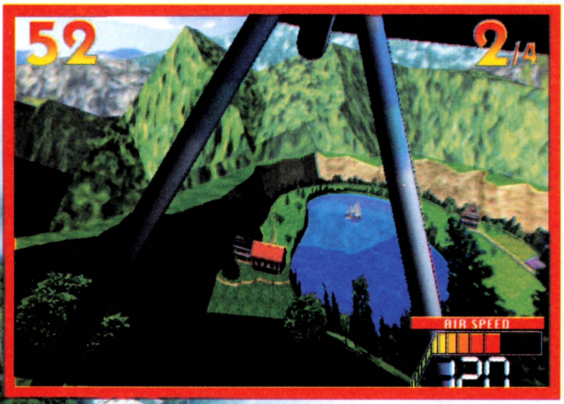
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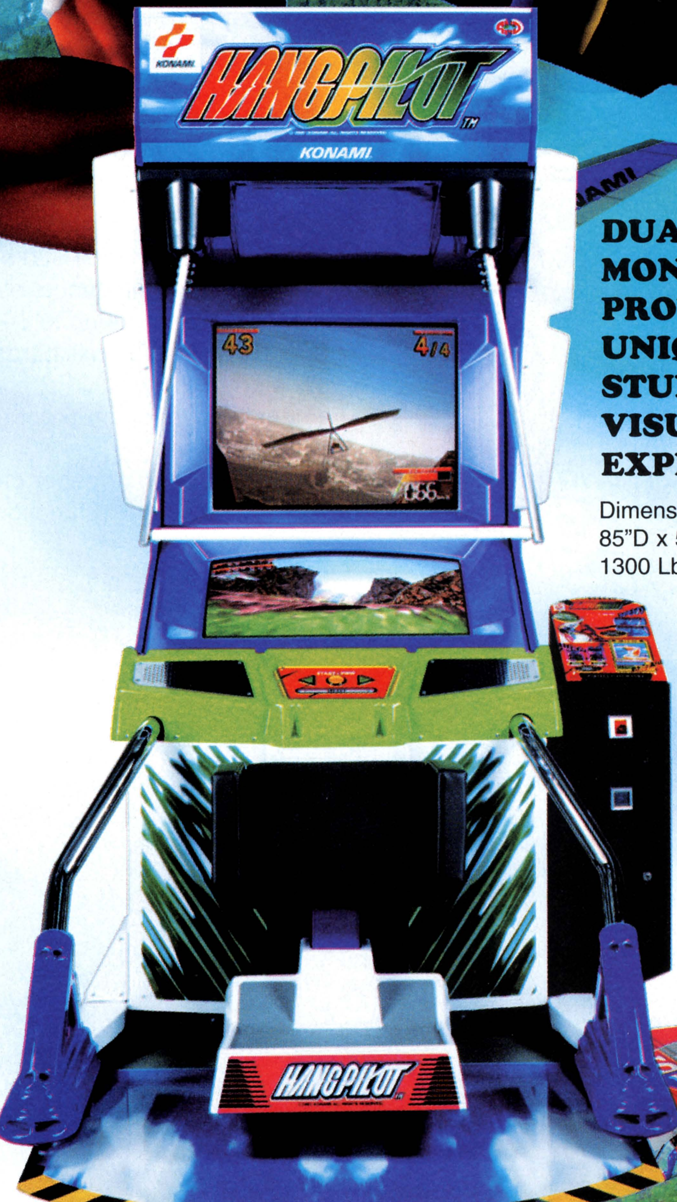
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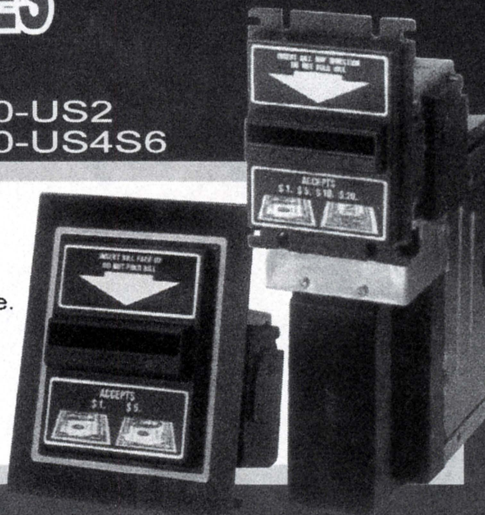
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Larry Munday builds a remote control box for **San Francisco Rush** and takes us through some secret moves.

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COVER

For nearly 100 years National Ticket Co. has served a number of changing industries. Descendants of the founders are still at the helm, (standing, l-r): Edward A. Ludes, plant manager (fourth generation owner); J. Edward Ludes, president (third generation owner); Robert J. Yost, vice president of production; William A. Alter, vice president of sales; Kenneth Kuznicki, director of administration; and Timothy J. Timco, sales manager (fourth generation owner). Seated: John Conway, director of product development (fourth generation owner); not pictured: Earl D. Foura, vice president of finance.

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FROM THE
EDITOR

Less-than-perfect, BUT BETTER THAN NOTHING

A dilemma in Texas would be an apt description of the legal quagmire operators are battling in the "remember the Alamo" state. Legislators have taken on the arduous task of banning redemption games. They don't actually declare that specific intent but their actions speak louder than their exact words.

It began with a biting proposal that would have effectively prohibited all amusement redemption machines except for games which involve substantial skill. It would be a crime to possess any number of machines (even video games!) that contain things like awarding free games or tickets, accepts more than one coin to influence the outcome of a single play, has internal retention mechanisms, or simulates a casino game.

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

Ironically, Texas seemed to be one state that exempted carnival games from the skill requirement, but that would change with the new proposal. I say ironic because just when things seem logical and are working as they should, some legislator sees a loophole. What makes it so tough is not only the $2,000 per day fine or the tough registration and permit requirements, but also that the tax collector would be able to seize machines if he thought the skill wasn't substantial enough. A tax collector with the power to determine if enough skill is there. Is that scary enough for you?

Play Meter's "Legal Eagle" Tom Fricke wrote his May column on the subject and as the chairman of IAFEC's Regulatory Oversight Committee he quickly gathered the other committee members (Frank Seninsky, Lary Zucker, Jerry Monday, David Bishop, and me) on a conference call to discuss it. No grass grew under his feet as we all had a draft of a statement on our desks early the next day.

This is not an attempt to explain all the nuances of the bill itself because Tom has gone above and beyond the call of duty to tell our readers about it. In fact, check out his column this month to find out the latest on this issue. Instead, I would like to begin by stressing that things like this happen all the time in this industry. There are potential tragedies looming if committees like the one Tom heads up are not there to intervene on the industry's behalf. AMOA, AAMA, IAFEC, and IAAPA all have committees dedicated to monitor laws and regulations. But no one person can do it themselves.

Tom likened the Texas fiasco to a surprise bombing raid: "It was drafted without one word of consultation with our industry and was introduced on the latest date for the introduction of bills, Pearl Harbor-style."

This isn't the first time, nor will it be the last time our industry is bombarded with negative proposals from a misguided or misinformed legislative body. We're perceived as an industry practically without morals! We're often included in a category legislators sometimes call "sin taxes" when discussions of raising money comes up.

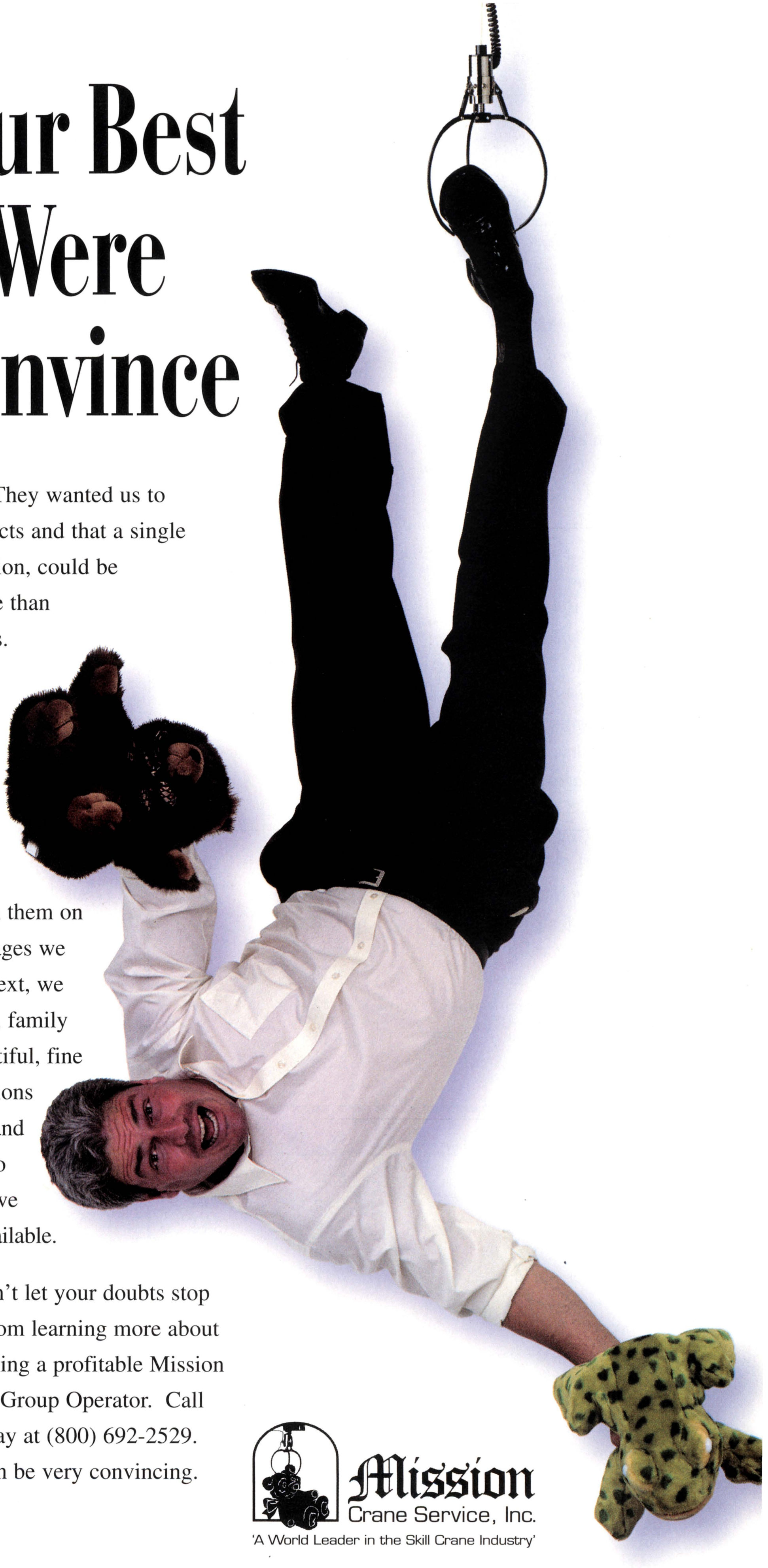
I could say I'm outraged by the prospect of having more preposterous laws stacked upon the industry's already burgeoning list of irrational laws because I am. But right now I'm concerned about a lackadaisical attitude permeating the industry when it comes to supporting its associations. I've expressed disbelief towards operators who say they can't afford to join their state or national association, yet are there to reap the benefits of efforts put forth by those in the association.

I asked an operator one time why he didn't belong to his state association and his answer went something like this: "They haven't done anything for me so why should I give them my hard-earned money?"

When I reminded him that his association had fought a barely-won battle over a proposed gross receipts tax, which ultimately saved his business literally thousands of dollars, he said he didn't know anything about it. Pretty sad isn't it? I can say without hesitation that he would have been the first to scream bloody murder about paying thousands more in taxes, yet won't bother to support the association.

I will be the first in line to admit that the associations are not perfect; far from it sometimes. My husband's not perfect (no, you're not, honey!) but I love him and support him. We have to do that with our associations. Get involved. Find out what committees need people and volunteer. How would my husband know when he screws up if I'm not there to rub it in...er, let him know? How will the associations get any better if everyone sits back complaining? A less-than-perfect association is better than not having one at all. ▲

Some Of Our Best Operators Were Hard To Convince



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Equipment Poll

VIDEO KITS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. Tekken 3 *(Namco)*	8.45	110
2. Area 51 *(Atari)*	7.97	1031
3. Police Trainer *(P&P)*	7.91	136
4. Golden Tee 3D Golf *(Incred. Tech)*	7.65	925
5. Three *(Capcom)*	7.42	69
6. Point Blank *(Namco)*	7.23	543
7. Tournament Solitaire *(Dynamo)*	7.08	519
8. Tekken 2 *(Namco)*	7.07	973
9. World Class Bowling *(Incredible Tech.)*	7.00	257
10. Die Hard Arcade *(Sega)*	6.98	343
11. Super Puzzle Fighter II *(Capcom)*	6.90	53
12. X-Men vs. Street Fighter *(Capcom)*	6.78	273
13. Metal Slug *(SNK)*	6.64	418
14. Strikers, 1945 *(Worldwide)*	6.59	133
15. Raiden Fighters *(Fabtek)*	6.57	64
16. Bust-A-Move *(SNK)*	6.37	483
17. Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	6.34	1618
18. Street Fighter EX *(Capcom)*	6.33	*
19. Bust-A-Move Again *(Taito)*	6.21	460
20. 19XX *(Capcom)*	6.16	74
21. Raiden DX *(Fabtek)*	6.15	346
22. Wayne Gretsky's 3D Hockey *(Atari)*	6.11	*
23. Raiden II *(Fabtek)*	6.04	785
24. Maximum Hangtime *(Midway)*	6.02	45
25. Marvel Super Heroes *(Capcom)*	6.00	382
26. Tekken *(Namco)*	6.00	791
27. Soul Edge II *(Namco)*	5.98	207
28. D&D Shadow Over Mystara *(Capcom)*	5.92	201
29. Namco Classics Vol. 2 *(namco)*	5.90	*
30. Super Sidekicks 3 *(SNK)*	5.88	73

COUNTERTOPS

1. Megatouch XL *(Merit)*	8.93	115
2. Megatouch IV *(Merit)*	8.15	744
3. Megatouch Tournament *(Merit)*	7.76	344
4. Touchmaster *(Williams)*	7.76	384
5. Megatouch *(Merit)*	7.17	867
6. Magical Touch *(Micro)*	7.00	518
7. Concorde 1 *(JVL)*	6.72	117

CLASSIC VIDEOS

1. Out Run *(Sega)*	6.51	23
2. Ms. Pac-Man *(Bally/Midway)*	6.38	*
3. Galaga *(Bally/Midway)*	6.13	*
4. Pole Position *(Atari)*	6.12	*
5. Raiden *(Fabtek)*	5.72	*
6. Centipede *(Atari)*	5.54	*

VIDEO DEDICATED

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. Tourn. 3D Golf *(In. Tech.)*	8.37	195
2. Maximum Force *(Atari)*	8.15	106
3. Gun Blade NY *(Sega)*	7.90	482
4. Time Crisis *(Namco)*	7.66	765
5. Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	7.29	1324
6. Virtua Cop 2 *(Sega)*	7.22	767
7. Virtua Fighter 3 *(Sega)*	7.00	125
8. Rampage World Tour *(Midway)*	6.81	39
9. Virtual On *(Sega)*	6.46	127
10. Run and Gun 2 *(Konami)*	5.82	72
11. Virtua Fighter 2 *(Sega)*	5.82	930
12. Killer Instinct 2 *(Midway)*	5.75	305

VIDEO SIMULATORS

1. Cruis'n World *(Midway)*	9.21	359
2. San Francisco Rush *(Atari)*	8.95	296
3. Wave Runner *(Sega)*	8.75	164
4. Alpine Racer 2 *(Namco)*	8.61	225
5. Cruis'n USA *(Midway)*	8.46	1846
6. Daytona USA *(Sega)*	8.32	1993
7. Alpine Surfer *(Namco)*	8.17	300
8. Alpine Racer *(Namco)*	8.12	991
9. Tokyo Wars *(Namco)*	7.67	121
10. Cyber Cycles *(Namco)*	7.33	837
11. Home Run Derby *(ICE)*	7.21	128
12. Suzuka 8 Hours 2 *(Namco)*	6.87	1462
13. Sega Rally *(Sega)*	6.81	723
14. Winding Heat *(Konami)*	6.80	116
15. Manx TT *(Sega)*	6.71	486
16. OutRunners *(Sega)*	6.68	1732
17. Indy 500 Twin *(Sega)*	6.57	455
18. Ridge Racer 2 *(Namco)*	6.41	468
19. Lucky & Wild *(Namco)*	6.36	1346
20. COPS *(Atari)*	5.55	610
21. Prop Cycle *(Namco)*	5.29	140

PINBALLS

1. Attack From Mars *(Bally)*	8.16	753
2. Star Wars Trilogy *(Sega)*	7.74	92
3. Scared Stiff *(Bally)*	7.72	389
4. Junk Yard *(Williams)*	7.47	176
5. The Addams Family *(Bally)*	7.39	3235
6. Arabian Nights *(Williams)*	7.14	417
7. Theatre of Magic *(Bally)*	6.97	1114
8. Star Trek: TNG *(Williams)*	6.87	1660
9. World Cup Soccer *(Bally)*	6.80	1055
10. Space Jam *(Sega)*	6.54	130
11. Independence Day *(Sega)*	6.45	228
12. Pinball Magic *(Capcom)*	6.44	195
13. Road Show *(Williams)*	6.43	725
14. Apollo 13 *(Sega)*	6.30	377
15. Twilight Zone *(Bally)*	6.25	1129

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Equipment Poll

REDEMPTION

ALLEY BOWLERS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	ICE Ball *(ICE)*	7.63	382
2.	Skee-Ball Lightning *(Skee-Ball)*	7.33	718
3.	Stack-’Em *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.33	39
4.	Bug Bash *(Bay Tek)*	7.22	432
5.	Willy B. Stinky *(Bay Tek)*	7.00	341

SPORTS GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Rage in the Cage *(Fun Merchants)*	7.44	262
2.	Arm Champs *(Jaleco)*	7.43	193
3.	Hoop It Up *(Atari)*	7.22	753
4.	Super Shot *(Skee-Ball)*	7.18	462
5.	Full Court Fever *(ICE)*	7.11	516
6.	Shoot to Win *(Smart)*	6.75	419
7.	Hoop Shot *(ICE)*	6.70	105
8.	Full Court Frenzy *(ICE)*	6.62	298
9.	Around the World *(UETD)*	6.29	181
10.	Slugfest *(Williams)*	6.23	5
11.	Putting Challenge II *(G.L. Tech.)*	5.91	51
12.	UB-QB Football *(Skee-Ball)*	5.77	112

SINGLE COIN PUSHERS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Jungle Jive *(Coastal)*	7.00	958

SINGLE CRANES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Action Claw *(Fun Merchants)*	8.18	538
2.	Big Choice *(Fun Merchants)*	7.58	505
3.	Rainbow *(Rainbow)*	7.57	574
4.	Candy Man *(Fun Merchants)*	7.29	191
5.	Clean Sweep *(Smart)*	7.23	688
6.	Classic Watch Crane *(Smart)*	7.00	472
7.	Jumbo Crane *(Grayhound)*	6.94	509
8.	Candy Crane *(Smart)*	6.65	374
9.	Hollywood Crane *(Maxwell)*	6.57	74
10.	Skill Crane *(Grayhound)*	5.89	280
11.	Pit Stop *(Smart)*	5.56	76

CHILD-SIZE GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Mini Dunx *(ICE)*	7.10	80
2.	Smart Toss Em *(Smart)*	6.88	419
3.	Shoot To Win! Jr. *(Smart)*	6.64	492
4.	Kiddie Whac-A-Mole *(Bob’s Space)*	6.43	36
5.	Jr. All American *(UETD)*	6.29	46
6.	The Flintstones *(ICE)*	6.10	50
7.	Hightops *(Skee-Ball)*	6.00	53
8.	Feed Big Bertha *(Smart)*	5.93	268
9.	Awesome Toss ’Em *(Lazer-Tron)*	5.78	119
10.	Bozo Basketball *(Design Plus)*	5.69	60
11.	Godzilla Wars Jr. *(Namco)*	5.67	96
12.	Skee-Toss B.C. *(Skee-Ball)*	5.64	6

ROLL DOWNS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Spin-a-21 *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.50	76
2.	Spin To Win *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.90	601
3.	Jungle Rama *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.88	211
4.	Rock N Roll *(Bay Tek)*	6.36	24
5.	Clown Roll Down *(Bay Tek)*	6.13	153
6.	Tic-Tac-Toe *(Skee-Ball)*	5.23	38

REDEMPTION

NOVELTY

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Cyclone *(ICE)*	9.02	1105
2.	Dinoscore *(Planet Earth)*	8.00	942
3.	Treasure Falls *(Planet Earth)*	8.00	453
4.	Solar Spin *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.89	271
5.	Round ‘n Round *(Astro)*	7.82	585
6.	Colorama *(Bromley)*	7.64	744
7.	Cyclone Jr. *(ICE)*	7.43	506
8.	Rising Waters *(Bob’s Space)*	7.29	139
9.	Shot Clock 2 *(Astro)*	6.67	85
10.	Pop-A-Slot *(Coastal)*	6.57	281
11.	The Dealer *(CCI)*	6.29	31
12.	Star Shooter *(Bay Tek)*	6.22	*
13.	The Flintstones *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.17	102
14.	Flip N Win *(Planet Earth)*	6.13	304
15.	Wheelin-N-Dealin *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.13	59
16.	Pop-A-Ball *(Coastal)*	6.11	84
17.	Dump the Ump *(ICE)*	5.86	78
18.	Pop-A-Tac-Toe *(Coastal)*	5.86	46
19.	Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe *(Data East)*	5.78	30
20.	Simple Simon *(Am. Sammy)*	5.77	90
21.	Magic Mr. X *(Am. Sammy)*	5.67	37
22.	Cosmo Gang *(Data East)*	5.36	2
23.	Buddy Bear *(Smart)*	5.33	161
24.	Sidewinder *(Bob’s Space)*	5.33	*

COIN DROP GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Big Haul *(Benchmark)*	8.67	409
2.	Goin’ Rollin’ *(Seidel)*	7.90	633
3.	Smokin’ Token *(Seidel)*	7.88	893
4.	Super Rock-N-Bowl *(Bromley)*	7.67	154
5.	Wheel ‘M In *(Bromley)*	7.50	867
6.	Sega Sports *(Sega)*	7.29	137
7.	Cut the Cheese *(Sega)*	7.10	432
8.	Rock-N-Bowl *(Bromley)*	7.10	354
9.	Home Run Hitter *(CCI)*	6.92	512
10.	Super Bank It II *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.91	123
11.	Wheel of Fortune *(Fun House)*	6.89	296
12.	Aftershock *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.65	454
13.	Roll For Gold *(Benchmark)*	6.64	295
14.	The Mask *(Data East)*	6.64	594

GUN GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Water Game *(Bob’s Space)*	7.67	136
2.	Miner’s Revenge *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.14	116
3.	Big Mouth *(Meltec)*	7.00	103
4.	Ghosthunter *(Hanaho Games)*	5.89	35
5.	Knock-Down *(Meltec)*	5.60	85

BOPPING/STOMPING GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Spider Stompin *(Jaleco)*	7.45	731
2.	Cracky Crab *(Namco)*	7.06	131
3.	Wacky Gator *(Data East)*	6.78	281
4.	Ribbit Racin *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.72	612
5.	Swamp Stomp *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.56	439
6.	Whac-A-Mole *(Bob’s Space)*	6.53	75
7.	Robo-Bop *(Coastal)*	6.25	77

Results are based on monthly Equipment Poll ballot returns. Point Value = average of ballot ratings on a scale of 1-10; Longevity Points = standings on Best 60 combined game lists (#1 game receives 60 points, #2 game receives 59 points, etc.) **Indicates new or reappearing games.*

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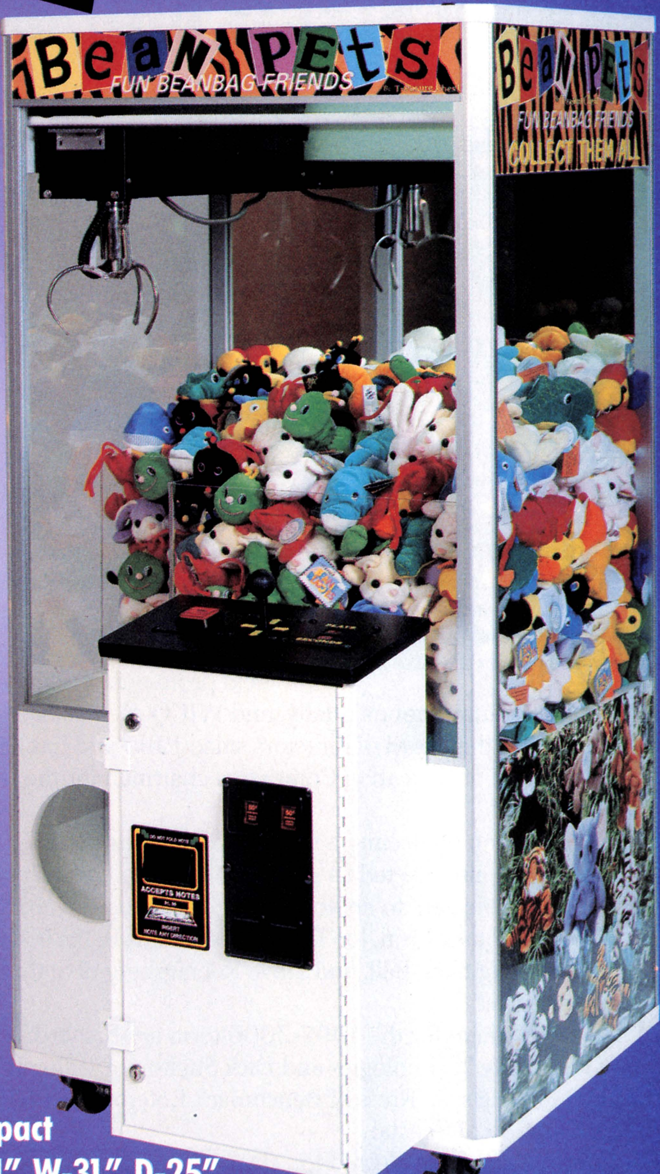
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COIN-OP NEWS

AAMA elects officers and board of directors

Mike Rudowicz, president of Konami of America, has been elected the 1997-98 president of the American Amusement Machine Association.

Mike Rudowicz, president of Konami of America, has been elected to succeed Rick Kirby of New England Coin-Op as president of the American Amusement Machine Association for 1997-98. While he will face re-election next year, the AAMA president generally serves for two years.

Rudowicz is an industry veteran having held positions in operating, distributing, and manufacturing. Prior to his current position at Konami, which he has held for the last four years, he held prominent positions with Rowe International, Bally, and WICO. He has been a member of the board of directors since 1995 and has held the position of Education Committee chairman for the last two

In addition to electing a new president at its annual meeting, AAMA also elected its slate of officers and board of directors. Re-elected to another term on the board were Ron Carrara of Lazer-Tron, Joe Dillon of Williams Bally/Midway, Joe Sladek of Skee-Ball, and Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales and Service.

Joining them for the 1997-2000 term are Richard Ditton of Incredible Technologies and Dick Shelton of Valley Recreation Products. Al Kress of Benchmark Entertainment and Sal Mirando of Coastal Amusements were elected to serve as alternates.

Prior to the election, Kirby presented outgoing board members with plaques thanking them for their service to both the association and the industry. Board members whose terms expired included Dillon, Carrara, Sladek, and Koenigsberg, as well as Frank Gumma of American Vending Sales and John Margold.

Members remaining on the board are Rich Babich of Colorado Game Exchange, Frank Cosentino of Namco America, David Capilouto of Greater Southern Distributing, Ralph Coppola of ICE, John Gatens of Southgate Amusement & Vending, Rudowicz, Al Stone of Sega GameWorks, Mark Struhs of Dynamo, and Kirby, who will serve on the past president's council

The annual meeting was also marked by two award ceremonies: the President's Award which went to Sladek and the Joe Robbins Award presented to Kirby. The first is given to an association member who has contributed outstanding efforts and assistance to the AAMA staff over the past year, while the second honors outstanding participation, contribution, and service to the industry.

Kirby presented the President's Award to Sladek, calling him the dedicated AAMA member "who goes the extra mile to ensure that AAMA programs are successful.."

"Joe played a very instrumental role in the past 12 months in overseeing the association's financial matters," added AAMA executive director Bob Fay. "As chairman of the Budget Committee, Joe took the initiative to insure that a balanced budget was maintained and that all finances were controlled properly."

Fay presented the Joe Robbins Award to Kirby, pointing out that he has been a tremendous asset to the board having just completed a two-year term as president. "Rick has definitely proven himself as a leader in the industry as well as in association activities," Fay said. "He has consistently shown dedication not only to AAMA but to the industry as a whole and is most deserving of this award."

AAMCF announces new slate of directors

The American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF) recently elected Stuart Heller of Kiddie Rides USA, Rick Kirby of New England Coin-Op, and Ed Urich of Advanced Mfg. and Development to its board of directors at the AAMA annual meeting.

Members re-elected to their positions on the board include: Steve Koenigsberg of State Sales and Service, Frank Ballouz of PlayNet Technologies, John Margold, and Joe Robbins of Sega Enterprises.

"We have a good group of people running AAMCF this year," said AAMCF executive director Bob Fay. "By combining the old with the new, we are sure to get a fresh perspective on things without diminishing the continuity of the foundation."

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Q-Zar forms partnership with Japanese consortium

Q-Zar Inc. of Dallas, Texas, has incorporated Q-Video Inc. in partnership with a consortium of Japanese companies to help exploit its rapidly expanding distribution network and to capitalize on the company's growing purchasing power in the video game industry.

The principal partners from Japan include: Mitsui & Co. Ltd., the world's oldest trading firm; The SCC Ltd., one of the largest distribution companies in Japan and part of the Saison Group; and Dyflex Corp., a construction material manufacturer.

"Q-Video will be a very unique entity within the global amusement industry and, in addition to sourcing Q-Zar's needs, will be offering next-generation equipment from a wide range of sources," explained Mr. Keisei Miura, speaking on behalf of the Japanese consortium. "Management believes that a conservative estimate of revenues accruing to Q-Zar for the first 12 months of operations will be in excess of $15 million. With funding already secured, Q-Zar's capital contribution is negligible."

Q-Zar chairman and CEO Tom Butler said he was "delighted at the initiative shown by our Japanese partners and have confidence that this is only the first step in capitalizing on our relationships with some of our major Asian partners."

In other Q-Zar news, the company's chief operating officer John Cooke reported the newly opened Q-City family entertainment center in Dallas, which was featured in the June issue of Play Meter, is exceeding initial expectations. "We are particularly excited at the quality of locations now being offered for future Q-City developments and the endorsement of our concept by major property developers," he said. "We feel confident that within the next quarter we will have secured options for all the AAA locations we need for our roll-out over the next 24 months." At least two more Q-City projects will open this year, according to the company.

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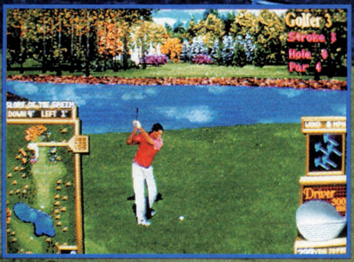
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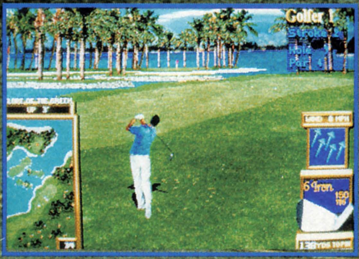
Stroke 3
Hole 5
Par 4
Driver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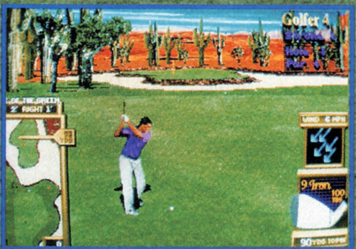
Golfer 4
9 Iron

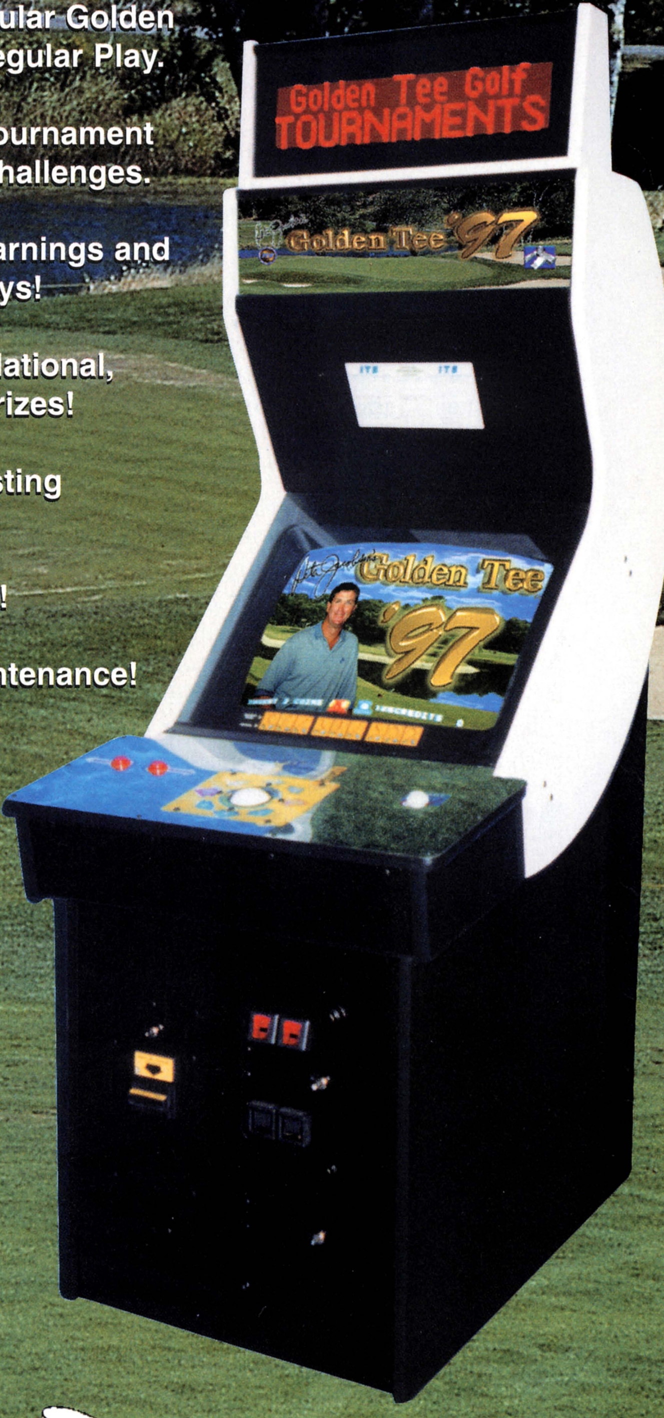
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Photo Vend signs agreement with APBI

Photo Vend International has signed a licensing agreement with APBI Interactive Kiosk Systems of Alexandria, Va., holders of the United States patent. The agreement allows Photo Vend to make photo sticker machines including make-your-own peel-off photo stickers from automated vending machines.

Photo Vend is reportedly the first company to license such rights under the patent. "We've just begun shipping our *Sticker Club* kiosks and they are already a big hit with teens," said the company's Mark Trotter.

"We are pleased to license to Photo Vend under our patent," said APBI president Sam Attenberg. "P.V.I. has demonstrated several years of success in the photo vending industry with a reputation for integrity and an ability to deliver a quality product backed by solid customer and technical support."

APBI is a national owner/operator of themed photo kiosks and reports it has a significant backlog of orders for its own *Sticker Station* machines. "The most amazing thing is unlike traditional photo booths, people truly have a blast using the sticker machines and it's fun to see how creative people are in finding unique applications for the photo stickers," Attenberg added. "We will vigorously protect our exclusive U.S. patent and prosecute any infringing photo sticker machine makers, importers, distributors, or locations found with offshore sourced, unlicensed machines."

Meucci becomes an APA national sponsor

American Poolplayers Association (APA) president Renee Poehlman announced recently that Meucci will be recognized as the official cue maker of the APA. The announcement reportedly comes after months of negotiation between the APA and several different cue manufacturers.

"We are looking forward to a mutually beneficial relationship as we feel this is a winning arrangement for both organizations," Poehlman said.

Meucci has designed a special line of cues specifically for the APA ranging in price from $125 to over $400. A 10 percent discount for this line of cues will be available to APA members.

The company will have its cues at all national APA events including the APA 9-Ball National Team Championship July 25-28; the Ladies Division APA 8-Ball National Team Championship July 25-28; and the Open Division APA 8-Ball National Team Championship July 28-Aug. 2. All three competitions will be held in Las Vegas.

Motion capture process for *Tekken 3* revealed

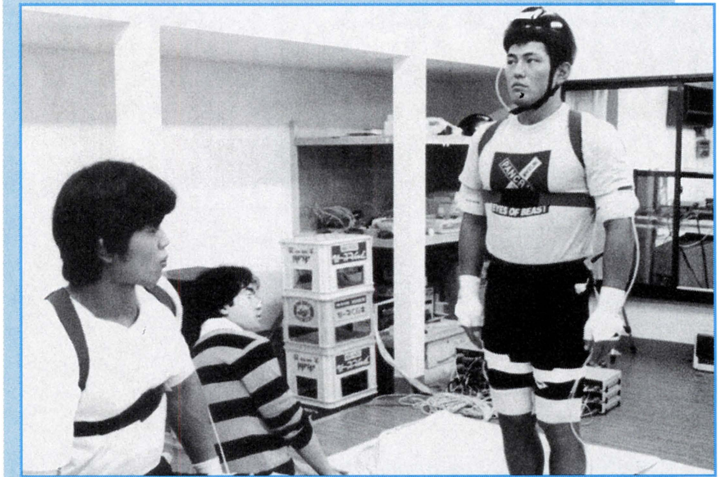
Even before its release in late March, the game community has hungrily been seeking information on the newest in the *Tekken* series, *Tekken 3*. While most want details on how to move and hidden characters, Namco has recently revealed another fascinating aspect of the game, the motion capture technique used to create some of the characters.

Motion capture is a technique used to assist in the labor intensive task of creating the thousands of body positions and situations required for a 3-D fighting game. While only slightly reducing the programming, it dramatically cuts down on laborious animation time.

Using actual martial arts experts, several sensors were placed on their head, arms, legs, and torso. Six special video cameras captured video and data which were then plotted to coordinates on several axis resulting in 3-D images.

While all characters in *Tekken 3* share life-like fluid movements, not all were made using motion capture. In *Tekken 3*, Hwoarang and Eddy Gordo benefited primarily from the technique. In *Tekken 2*, motion capture was used in the creation of Jun Kazama and Lei Wulong.

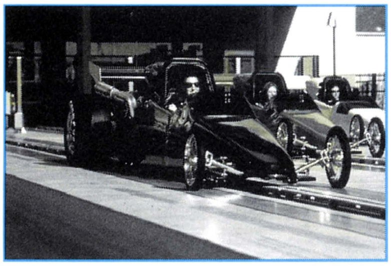
While the experts were punching and kicking, the *Tekken 3* development team drew the unenviable assignments of being human punching dummies. While one member held a thick pad to absorb part of the impact, another had to act as a brace. To capture the action in a truly realistic manner, the experts had to go full tilt and hold nothing back. Not surprisingly, three members of the development team were temporarily knocked out during the choke sleeperhold and another was injured during a spin kick.



Namco has recently revealed the motion capture technique used to create some of the characters in *Tekken 3*.

SpeedZone racing parks set to open

No longer is auto racing limited to watching professionals or virtual racing. SpeedZone, a new 12-acre park built around speed and competition, is changing the definition of active entertainment with its high-tech racing concept. The action was scheduled to begin last month with the opening of three locations, the first in Dallas and then in Atlanta and Los Angeles.


SpeedZone's Top Eliminator allows drivers to experience drag racing as six cars compete on a 140-yard drag strip.

As part of this concept, Malibu Entertainment Worldwide has partnered with SpeedZone Racing Team members including two-time Indianapolis 500 champion Al Unser Jr.; 1996 PPG Indy Car World Series champion Jimmy Vasser; CART rising star Bryan Herta; and 18-year-old NHRA Top Fuel rookie sensation Kristin Powell to utilize their expertise along with the latest technology in creating a realistic racing experience.

Players get a chance to try four different types of racing and get behind the wheel of actual 18-foot long, 300-horsepower dragsters and custom-built Indy scale cars to race their friends on tracks designed by top industry experts.

Geared toward young adults, the theme park features both outdoor and indoor interactive entertainment. The outdoor entertainment includes four specially designed racing attractions and Speedway Golf, a 36-hole race-themed miniature golf course. Indoor entertainment features a wide variety of the latest interactive games, a race-themed full-service restaurant and bar, and group meeting and party facilities.

"Racing and interactive entertainment are the two strongest entertainment trends," said vice president of marketing Craig Hudson. "SpeedZone combines the two to create a one-of-a-kind experience."

SpeedZone's four tracks offer different types of racing experiences: drag racing, Grand Prix racing, sprint track, and road racing. Top Eliminator allows drivers to experience drag racing as six cars compete on a 140-yard drag strip in 300 horsepower dragsters that accelerate from 0 to 70 mph in three seconds. Grand Prix Racing gives two drivers the chance to race head-to-head through hairpin turns in custom-built, scale Indy cars.

Slick Trax, or spring track racing, puts guests' driving skills to the test as up to 20 drivers race wheel-to-wheel in high-torque racers which go into a controlled four-wheel-slide through each turn on the highly polished concrete track. Finally, Turbo Track allows up to 28 drivers to compete on a 1,100-foot serpentine track in custom-built, scale cars.

Drivers may qualify for pole position on the weekly race ladder and then compete for cash and prizes. Weekly racing competitions offer as much as $500 in cash and prizes.

At the center of SpeedZone is the 21,000-square-foot clubhouse with front and back car-shaped facades and a 90-foot mural of a speeding race car. The interior of the clubhouse reflects the racing theme of the park with actual NASCAR cars, Indy cars, funny cars, and a top fuel dragster suspended from the ceiling, as well as memorabilia and racing murals throughout.

The Electric Alley indoor midway features more than 100 of the latest racing and other action-oriented simulator games, pool tables, and video and redemption games. For those who work up an appetite, the SpeedZone Cafe offers a fully-staffed, themed dining room, and a terraced bar and dining area with nine video monitors to let patrons relax after a hard day of racing.

Only persons 18 and over will be admitted to the park after 9 p.m.. Admission is free. Prices start at $5 to drive SpeedZone racers. All racing attractions require valid driver's licenses.

Good as gold

A suds and chips mixer at the 17th Annual VNEA International Championships was highlighted by the annual procession of flags. The competition was held at the end of May in Las Vegas. Look for full coverage of the event, including a comprehensive listing of winners, in the next issue of Play Meter.

New firm to develop brand identity programs

The formation of Location Based Branding Inc., a new company that will develop identity programs for site-specific venues, was announced last month at the Themed Entertainment Association conference in Orlando, Fla. The venture was founded by David Polinchock. "There was a need to create a single source for the unique disciplines involved in developing site-specific brand strategies, including the brand experience," said Polinchock. "Companies are looking for new ways to expand their brand. You can flip the channel when commercials come on, you can avoid the advertising on the Web, but you can't close your eyes when you're walking down the street and avoid seeing a building with a company's name on it."

The company will specialize in the planning, development, and operations of site-specific strategies that allow the target audience to interact with, understand, and become loyal to the brand. Staff members have backgrounds in design, construction, market research, operations, and new business development. "Our goal is to take the experience and technologies being used in theme park attractions and bring them to Madison Avenue," added Polinchock. "What's unique about our team is the addition of background in brand management."

Location Based Branding is currently developing creative concepts for a number of clients and working on a number of themed restaurant concepts. Polinchock is also the founder of the CyberEvent Group, a company that uses virtual reality for marketing and promotional programs. The CyberEvent Group recently announced an agreement to represent CyberFunk and its new product CyberBuggy in the United States. CyberBuggy is a new virtual reality, arcade attraction platform that will specialize in non-violent games. Its first entertainment experience will be Kaleidoscope Scooter, an adventure in which players rescue their musical notes from note eaters. CyberBuggy will debut at IAAPA '97 and then move to a location in New York. For more information on the CyberEvent Group or Location Based Branding, contact their offices, (212)674-0574. 200 East 16th St., Suite 1D, New York, NY 10003.

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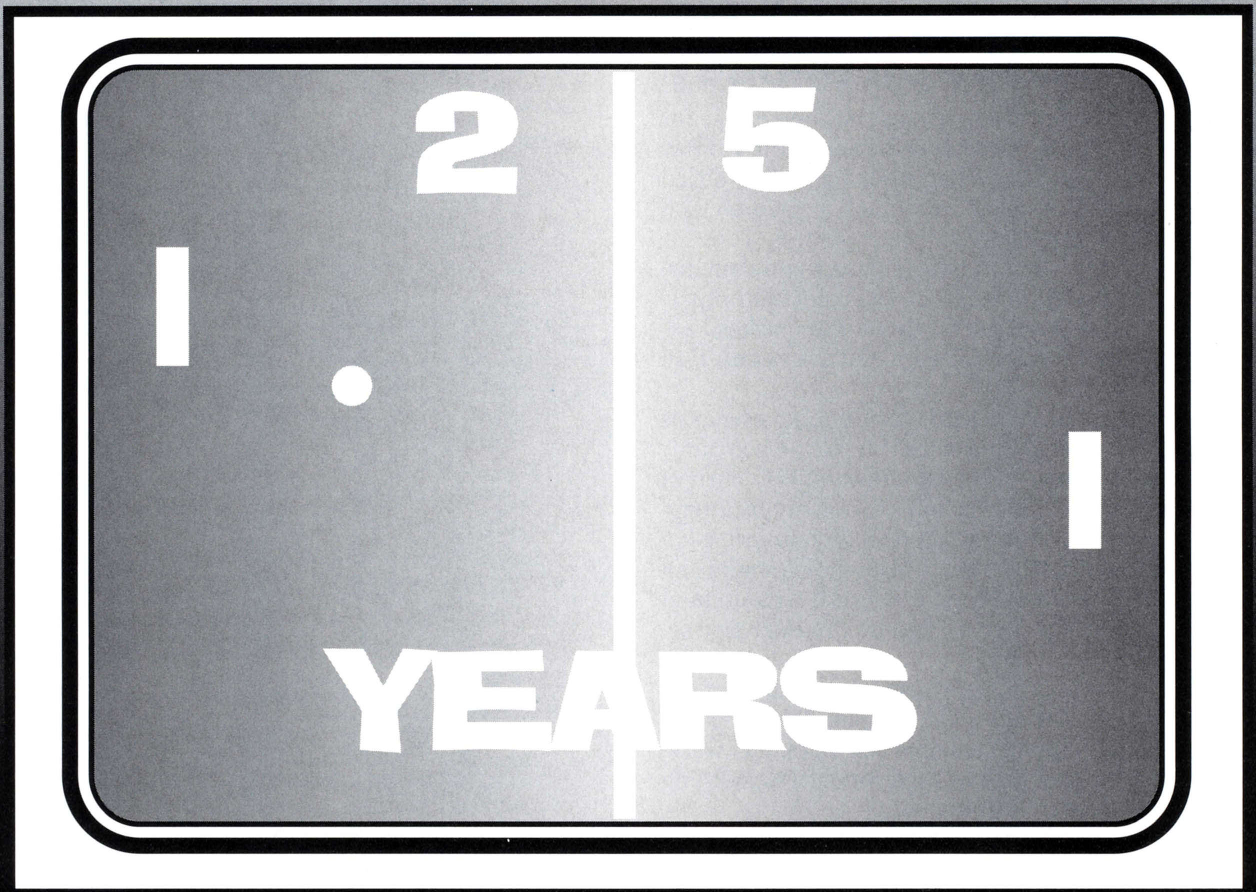

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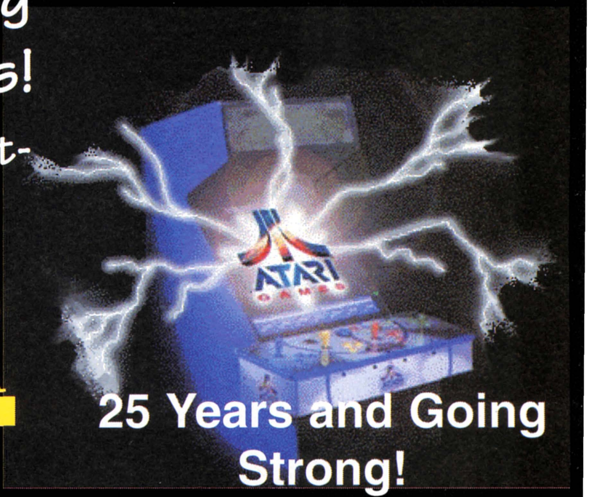


25 Years and Going Strong!

CashCode supplies transit system, names ad agency

Ticket vending and bill changing just became easier for the millions of commuters frequenting the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system after California-based Cointrol Equipment Corp. began retrofitting the system with CashCode's beltless bill validator.

"We did extensive testing of bill validators and coin dispensers and found that the CashCode bill validator outperformed any of the products currently on the market," explained Cointrol vice president of sales and marketing T. R. Reynolds.

The retrofit was a major boost to CashCode's presence as a manufacturer of bill validators, according to the company, which has made a number of recent innovations to current validator technology including patented, non-contact magnetic sensing (a security feature that rejects counterfeits); a beltless transportation system that discourages jamming; an easily accessible clam shell design that can be maintained without tools; and optional locking cassettes for improved security.

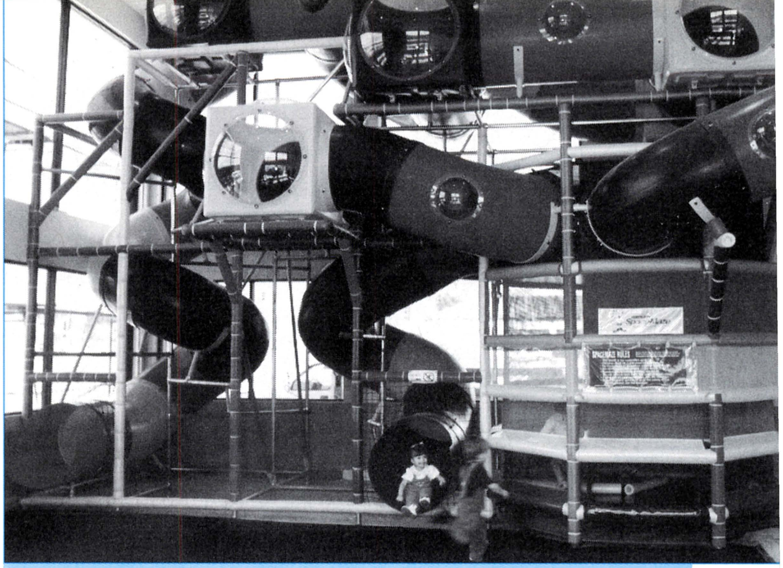
"We are pleased that Cointrol chose our product for the BART retrofit," said CashCode's Val Levitan. "We are confident that Bay-area commuters will find our validators workable and very easy to use, and we look forward to assisting Cointrol in serving BART's retrofit needs."

In other CashCode news, the company has retained the Las Vegas-based Sidra Kain Advertising & Public Relations to handle its national and international marketing, advertising, and public relations accounts.

"We are looking forward to working with SKA in developing an informative campaign for our company," said Levitan. "We are both growing and innovative companies and I think we will work well together."

Above right: CashCode's Paige Gamble (l), Val Levitan, and Steve Kinder (r) with Sidra Kain of the newly appointed advertising and public relations agency Sidra Kain.

Below left: CashCode bill validators were recently used to retrofit the rapid transit system in the San Francisco Bay area. The company's staff and friends having fun at a recent trade show, (l-r): Anna Lotter of *Casino Executive Magazine*, company president Val Levitan, sales director Paige Gamble, and R.S. Design's Charles Fichov (top); JVL's Boris Itskov, Tuning's Reymond Safft, and vice president of sales Steve Kinder.



Keiser Corp has formed a new Play Concepts Division which offers everything retailers need to establish safe, on-site customized play environments.

Keiser Corp. opens new Play Concepts Division

Keiser Corp., an innovator in exercise and children's activity equipment and leading participant in health and fitness research, has formed a new Play Concepts Division which offers everything retailers need to establish safe, on-site customized play environments.

From implementing front desk management systems to installing colorful learning carpets, Play Concepts is a turnkey package which is easy on retailers, convenient for parents, and fun for kids.

"There are two main components that make playrooms successful," said Dennis Keiser, president of Keiser Play Concepts. "Play areas have to provide an environment of fun and learning for kids and must offer peace of mind to parents so they feel comfortable dropping off their kids."

Play Concepts' turnkey play centers combine toys and games for children, including Keiser's popular Space Maze, with a unique parent-child interactive electronic monitoring service that includes on-site beepers, matching wristbands, and video monitors. This service enables parents to shop hassle-free while their children play in a supervised area.

Retailers will benefit from on-site kid centers in terms of repeat business due to the presence of a family-friendly shopping environment as well as from support services like promotional tie-ins and marketing opportunities.

According to Keiser, the turnkey aspect of its centers also equates to minimal construction and design headaches on the part of the retailer. Play Concepts' products and centers are ideal for malls, grocery stores, fitness centers, and automobile dealerships. Locations that already utilize the company's equipment include Kroger Grocery Stores, Fry's, City Markets, Slumberland, Stride Rite Shoes, Carpetland, Blockbuster Video, Zellers, the Q-Club Fitness Centers, and Bally's Health Clubs. For more information, call (800)888-7009; fax (209)265-4780.

To learn more about indoor playgrounds or children's entertainment turn to our special section, "Just For Kids," found inside this issue of Play Meter.

StrayLight creates automotive adventure for Hoechst Celanese

Hoechst Celanese
Materials Solutions for Powertrain/Chassis Systems
SOLUTIONS
SOLUTIONS

StrayLight Corp.'s Virtual Reality 3D-XTC systems were used at the recent SAE `97 trade show in Detroit, Mich., by Hoechst Celanese Technical Polymers.

StrayLight Corp.'s Virtual Reality 3D-XTC systems were used at the recent SAE `97 trade show in Detroit, Mich., by Hoechst Celanese Technical Polymers to increase the latter's booth traffic and educate thousands of guests about its product applications.

The virtual reality systems were used to demonstrate a customized version of an existing VR game called An Automotive Adventure. Each player was given a high-end VR helmet and special hand controller, and with these they navigated through a full 360-degree environment. Using real-time interactive technology from StrayLight, these players transformed Hoechst Celanese's polymer pellets into the final form: various automobile parts such as valves, bumpers, dashboards, etc.

"By combining the elements of fun, personal interaction, and product attributes, StrayLight designed a virtual reality game which clearly communicated our client's marketing message," explained StrayLight's director of marketing Victoria Massulli. "Another advantage for Hoechst Celanese was the affordable price because they chose to modify an existing game instead of designing a new game from scratch."

SAE attendees were able to watch their peers play inside the multiple 3D-XTC pods through large computer monitors perched next to each station. The Hoechst Celanese sales force were able to gather leads and discuss their products as clients or potential clients waited in line for the VR adventure.

StrayLight has received repeat business from corporate clients using VR for special event marketing. Hennessy Cognac, for instance, has returned to StrayLight for a new storyline and additional stereoscopic content in order to extend its promotion tour for a second year. Promotions developed by StrayLight for Jim Beam Brands' new liqueur, After Shock, have expanded to five international markets including Japan, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. following a 45-city, nine-month tour of the United States.

Other corporate clients that have used StrayLight's technology include American Express, AT&T, Blockbuster Entertainment, Coca-Cola, Danzka Vodka, Disney Resorts, ITT Educational Services, Oracle, *People Magazine*, Samsung, The American Hotel and Motel Association, and USA Networks.

RSA trade show provides new products and education

The Roller Skating Associations Convention and Trade Show held during the month of May in Las Vegas played host to close to 700 attendees and more than 100 exhibitors, all of whom came together for networking opportunities, new product displays, and educational seminars.

This year's convention offered 13 seminars on a variety of topics such as marketing, insurance, skating center parties, bulk mailing, youth violence, creativity, advertising, rink games, and more. At seminars like the Creative Brainstorming and Problem Solving session operators also had the opportunity to exchange ideas with other operators.

At the trade show, attendees got a chance to preview the latest trends and products in the industry from 109 companies. Several booths were filled with skates, wheels, accessories, and redemption games and prizes. Other vendors allowed people to sample their food products and learn about their services.

The trade show also featured a demonstration floor in the center of the room on which exhibitors would showcase their respective products for an allotted amount of time. Next year's convention is scheduled for May 3-7 at the Coronado Springs Resort, Disney World, Fla.

Have You HEARD?

▼ **Intel's CEO Andy Grove** was reportedly planning to use two arcade/LBE-type attractions during his keynote address at the E3 show late last month in Atlanta, Ga. The company was also planning to show several new games aimed at this market as well as the games already displayed at the Computer Game Developer's Conference this spring.

▼ **Midway Games** began shipping retail versions of its video game *War Gods* for the Nintendo 64 and Sony PlayStation console systems in late May.

▼ **George McAuliffe** has announced a move to new corporate offices, warehouses, and service facilities for his two companies, Pinnacle Entertainment Group Inc. and Pinnacle Entertainment Inc. The first serves as a consultant in the FEC and LBE industries, and the second is a game operator. They are now located at 241 Old Meramec Station Road, St. Louis, MO 63021; (314)394-1399; fax (314)394-1392.

▼ Needing more production, inventory, and administration space, **Ithaca Peripherals** is completing an addition of 23,700 square feet of space to its existing 36,300-square-foot facility in Ithaca, N.Y., bringing the size of the new facility to 60,000 square feet. The company also recently unveiled a new high-speed thermal printer at several consumer service trade shows.

▼ **3M Commercial Graphics Division** has opened the doors to a new World Wide Web site (http://www.MMM.com/imagegraphics) which features three closed doors at the home page, each of which opens to reveal three distinctly different sites: one geared to designers, another to graphics manufacturers, and a third tailored to product and brand marketers.

▼ **The National Indian Gaming Association** and its 152-member Indian Nations announced their opposition last month to tax proposals being offered in the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee to classify tribes as non-profits. This would take away their status as sovereign nations, the association argues.

▼ **Ceridian Corp.** has acquired the assets and contracts of Premier CashLink, a provider of cash advance services to the gaming industry that previously was a division of Service Data Corp. based in Omaha, Neb. ▲

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SUPER PING-PONG

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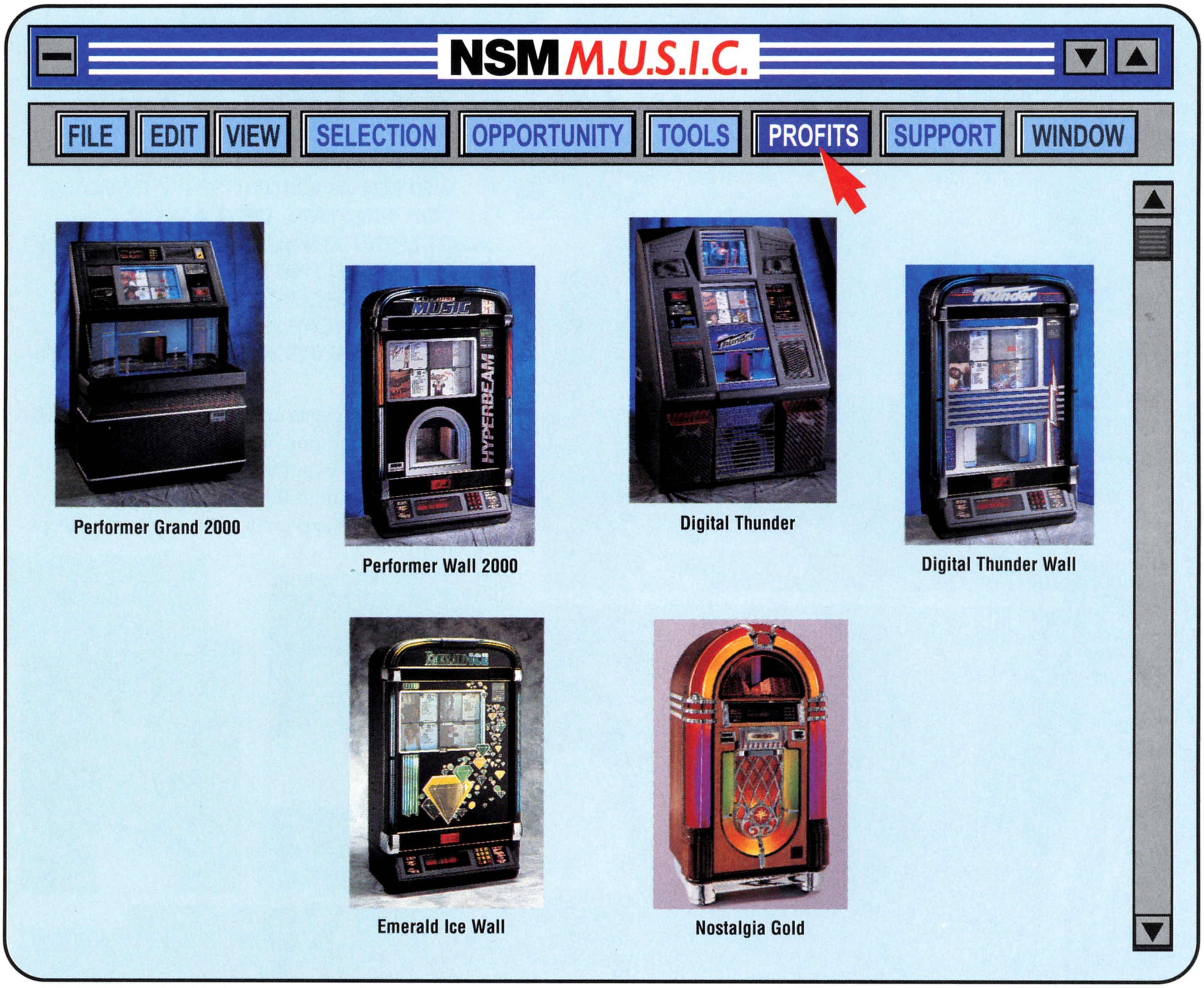

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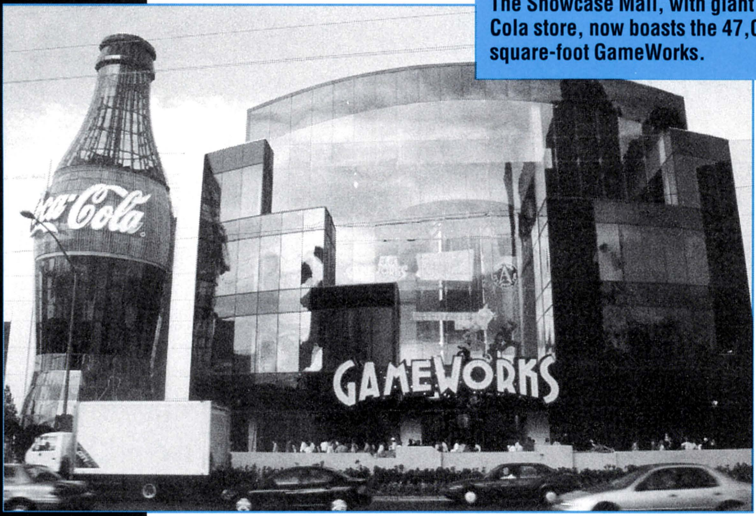
NEWS FEATURE

GAMEWORKS

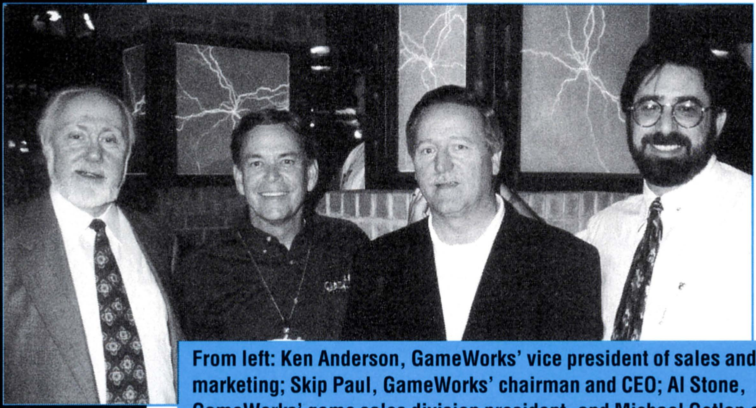
adds sparkle to Las Vegas club scene

PLAY METER CONTRIBUTING WRITER AND INDUSTRY INNOVATOR MICHAEL GETLAN OF AMUSEMENT CONSULTANTS WAS ON THE SCENE OF THE LATEST MEGA AMUSEMENT FACILITY OPENING IN LAS VEGAS. HERE IS HIS REPORT, FILED EXCLUSIVELY FOR PLAY METER READERS:

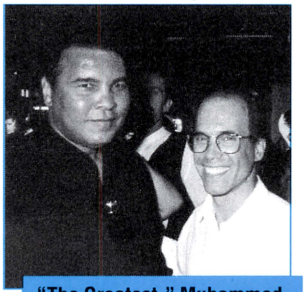
I flew into Las Vegas on the weekend of May 10 to attend the grand opening of the new Sega GameWorks facility on the Las Vegas strip. After hearing so much about the installation in Seattle, Wash., I wanted to experience this exciting concept first-hand.



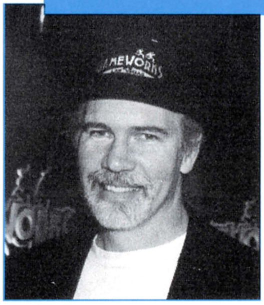
The Showcase Mall, with giant Coca-Cola store, now boasts the 47,000-square-foot GameWorks.



From left: Ken Anderson, GameWorks' vice president of sales and marketing; Skip Paul, GameWorks' chairman and CEO; Al Stone, GameWorks' game sales division president, and Michael Getlan of Amusement Consultants.

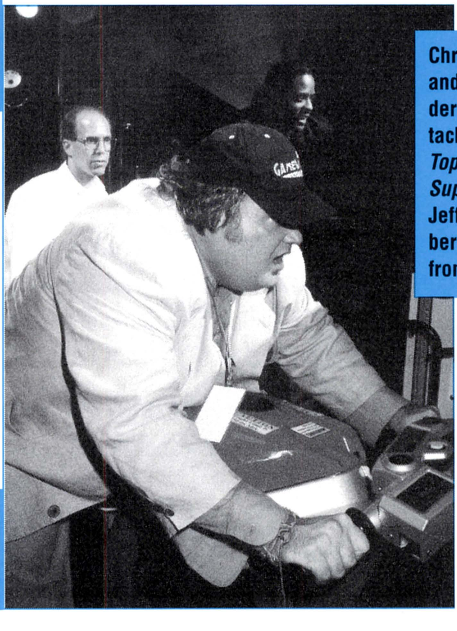


"The Greatest," Muhammed Ali, with SKG co-founder Jeffrey Katzenberg.



Jon Snoddy, GameWorks senior vice president of design.

Let the games begin! From left: GameWorks' president and COO Michael Montgomery, "Friends" star David Schwimmer, comedian Chris Farley, DreamWorks co-founder Jeffrey Katzenberg, and actor Blair Underwood announce the grand opening.

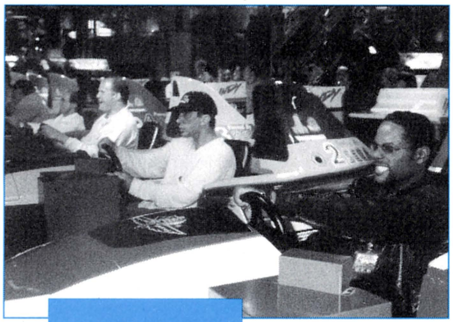


Chris Farley (c) and Blair Underwood (r) tackle Sega's *Top Skater* and *Super GT* as Jeffrey Katzenberg watches from left.

I went to GameWorks three evenings in a row: once to attend a normal day of operations, once to attend a party for Las Vegas' hospitality executives, and finally for the grand opening party. I wanted to observe the operation in a variety of settings, under different conditions, and listen to the feedback of the public as well as experience GameWorks for myself.

I had a great time all three nights. As an avid game player, and a major advocate of Sega equipment, I could not help but enjoy the facility. It was stocked full of simulators, upright videos, and assorted amusement equipment. Although GameWorks had some redemption equipment, and a small redemption center at the opening, GameWorks officials informed me that the number of redemption games would increase, as would the redemption center, in the near future.

There were many DreamWorks, GameWorks, and Sega officials at the opening, including DreamWorks SKG's founder Jeffrey Katzenberg, Sega GameWorks' CEO Skip Paul, Sega GameWorks' president Michael Montgomery, and Sega USA's president Al Stone, as well as Hollywood celebrities including David Schwimmer, Chris Farley, Blair Underwood, and Brenda Blethyn. Boxing legend Muhammed Ali made a rare appearance at the festivities. The Las Vegas facility totals 47,000 square feet and is located in the Showcase Mall on Las Vegas Blvd. near the MGM Grand and the New York-New York. It contains a number of food offerings, including a Starbucks coffee bar, a 100-seat full-service restaurant, a Fry Station that serves fries and sodas, and a 5,000-square-foot full-service bar. The bar includes a 15-seat Internet Lounge for communicating on the Internet and among other seats in the lounge, as well as a few classic video games.



Blair Underwood (r) and David Schwimmer (l) take the track on Sega's *Indy 500*.

The 75-foot tall free-standing rock climbing wall, which I decided not to climb, is a great draw into the facility from the front entrance of the Showcase Mall. GameWorks is located in the lower level of the Mall with entrances from the Strip or the mall itself. The Showcase Mall also contains a giant Coca-Cola merchandise store and a multiscreen theater at the present time.

There are several signature games, in various stages of development, created for the GameWorks concept. I am very interested in these games, as I am hoping that they will lead to additional game platforms that Sega will then market to the rest of the industry. Only one of the games was ready for the opening, with GameWorks officials saying that the others will be coming soon.

GameArc, an eight-player multiscreen game platform with networking capability and high end sound package, was operating at the opening. Although software is under development the platform was operating Descent, a home software package. I felt that with new software this could be a really great game to play, even if I was playing with strangers, which is a common occurrence in Las Vegas.

Vertical Reality, a 12-player game for three teams of four players, was not operating at the opening, so I could not play this game. It sounds interesting, with teams competing against the clock and rising vertically as they play. And a hidden room, with a new experience from Steven Spielberg, one of the DreamWorks founders, was also not available for me to play.

I still had a great time. GameWorks decided on a debit card system, which was working well, and the staff seemed to be ready and willing to help those players in need. The facility, which cost an estimated $25 million to build, certainly has a high-tech look and feel. I can say from experience that visitors to Las Vegas are looking for an upscale experience in everything that they do.

Sega GameWorks officials stress that not every market will be appropriate for a GameWorks operation in this elaborate configuration. Many of the installations will be reduced in size on the scale of a Sega City or smaller. Only time will tell which of the various activities found at the Las Vegas facility will make the cut for the majority of GameWorks sites. But all industry members should put GameWorks Las Vegas on their list of things to see on the next trip to Nevada. ▲

GameWorks is a self-described "new breed of club" offering different entertainment zones such as the Loading Dock, Arena, and Loft. The Las Vegas facility is the second in a series; the first opened in Seattle, Wash., in March (see June Play Meter). Future GameWorks locations include Ontario, Calif., Tempe, Ariz., and Dallas, Texas.

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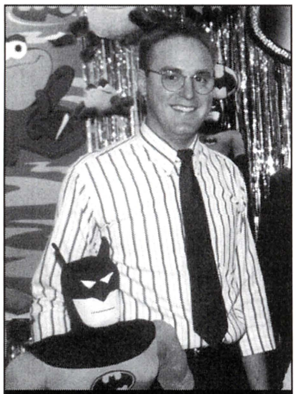
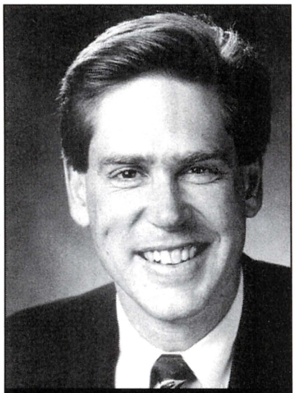
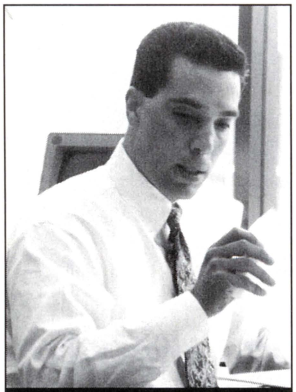

Robert Vittitoe


Stephan Brown


Doug Shipley

Adonna Jerman

ROBERT VITTITOE has been named redemption sales manager for Rhode Island Novelty of Johnston, R.I., a company that imports redemption merchandise, toys, giftware, party supplies, crane and rotary items, and licensed merchandise. Vittitoe previously worked in distribution as well as with Gekay Sales, Oriental Trading, and Northeast Imports.

Valley Recreation Products has named **STEPHAN BROWN** as vice president of consumer products. He will be responsible for this expanding line including developing and implementing a strategic plan to achieve sales and profit growth. Brown was formerly managing director of Hummingbird Marine Electronics.

Said Mark Schiller, president of Valley, "Steve has the ideal combination of qualities we always look for here at Valley, as he has proven management experience in progressively more demanding marketing, advertising, and sales positions, plus a history of delivering outstanding results. We look forward to working with him and expect he will play a vital role in helping Valley to reach a still stronger position in consumer products."

DOUG SHIPLEY has been named vice president of marketing and sales for Kiddie's Mfg. Shipley has a long history in coin-op that covers every segment of the business. He held an operations position at Bally, fulfilled distributor duties as national sales manager at Cleveland Coin, then moved on to the manufacturing side at Sega and toy marketing for two years at Mattel Toy Co.

Shipley said he "missed coin-op immensely," saw an opportunity, and resigned to work with Kiddie's. He expects to bring a new level of profitability and incremental business to the industry.

Kiddie's Mfg. president and CEO Eric Torres commented, "I could not have asked for a more well rounded and highly regarded individual than Doug." Shipley can be reached at (888)898-1144; fax (847)550-6818.

ADONNA JERMAN, executive director of the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association, has decided to leave association management and move on to other pursuits. Effective June 1, **TERRY STEVENSON** took over the reins of association executive director. Over the years Adonna worked tirelessly on behalf of ICMOA, traveling the state on behalf of major issues such as video lottery, organizing the annual state meeting along with her staff, working with the association's attorney and lobbyists, attending trade events, and serving on seminar panels. Good luck in the future to Adonna, and welcome aboard Terry!

The Enchanted Castle Restaurant and Entertainment Complex in Lombard, Ill., has promoted **MICHELE RITTORNO** from marketing associate to marketing manager and named **ANGELA HATFIELD** to fill the post of marketing associate.

Rittorno will manage in-house promotions, community relations, direct mail campaigns, and print advertising. Before joining Enchanted Castle in June 1995 she was with Disney Stores and other retailers.

Hatfield will be responsible for the Castle crew newsletter, in-house publicity, and press releases. Prior to coming on board at Enchanted Castle she was with two radio stations and served as assistant marketing coordinator for Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

Californians **WILLIAM JOHNSON** of Sacramento and **DAVID FLEMING** of Northridge were elected to the board of directors of the Roller Skating Associations at the RSA's recent convention and trade show. Johnson, who owns California Skate University, is the new sectional director for California, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. Fleming, who is half owner of Northridge Skateland and a partner in the Mountasia FEC in Santa Clarita, is one of three at-large directors on the RSA board. ▲

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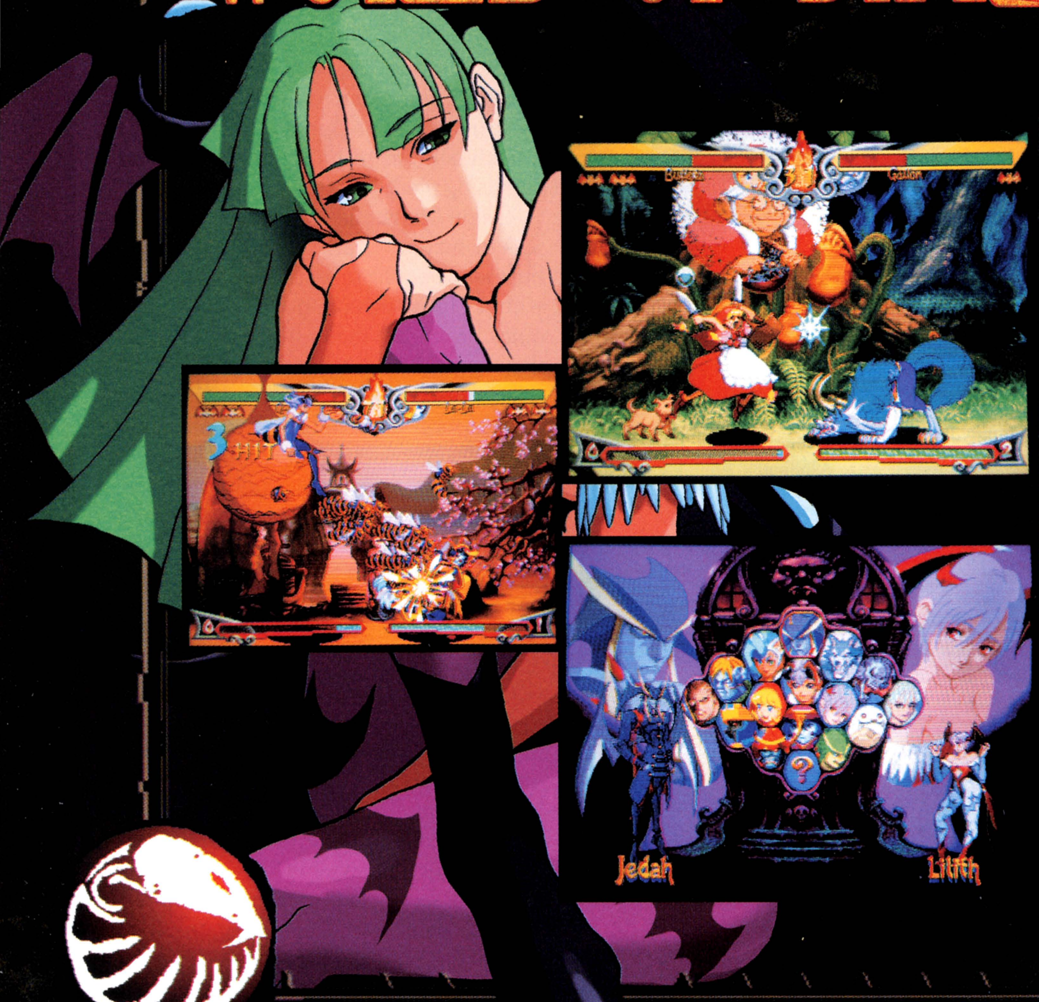

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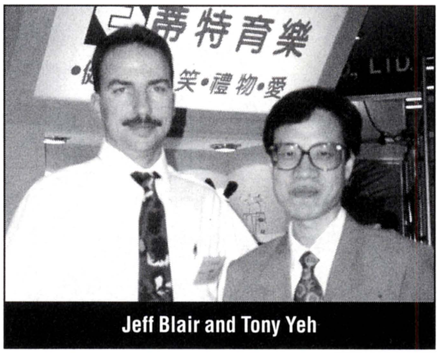
EYE ON
ASIA

JEFF **BLAIR** and TONY **YEH**

MAINLAND CHINA: mass market or mass hype?

Imagine if you will a market of consumers so large that saturation might take years and years. In fact, it might never occur at all. Such is the case with mainland China and its population of 1.2 billion. That's right, I said billion. That's more than 50 times greater than Taiwan's entire population. Remember how handsome that market was for the amusement industry?


Jeff Blair and Tony Yeh

When China's government loosened its grip on the strict policies that for so long hindered economic growth for its people, a steady stream of once forbidden product began finding its way to the region. The people of this huge nation had long had a thirst for the things that for us in America were always on the shelf at the store. Products like a can of Coke or Pepsi, a hamburger at the fast food restaurant, or a candy bar at the convenience store were things that you and I are accustomed to buying each and every day, yet were out of their reach.

The people of China are now getting accustomed to our style of life. More and more the streets of this vast country resemble parts of America, as huge corporations set up shop and distribute their products on the shelves of local markets. The amusement industry would seem a sure bet for success with the people of China.

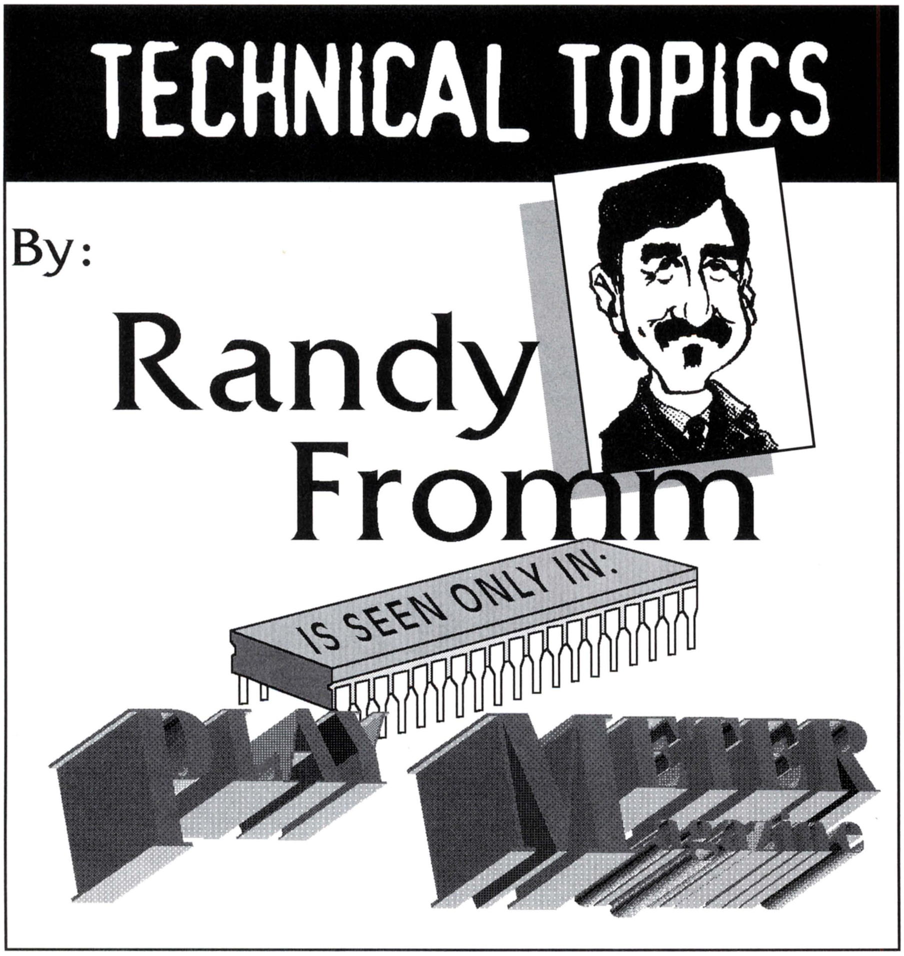
Three or four years ago, the process of bringing games to China on a regular basis began; it looked as though our industry would seriously benefit from yet another emerging market. Since then, however, a few barriers have risen and delayed the process and with it the hopes of many game manufacturers looking for an increase in their game sales. Some of the barriers, like high import duties on new games (50-60 percent) and local copycat manufacturers, made it nearly impossible to sell games to China at affordable prices.

Still some companies found a way to export to China. Undoubtedly, a few even profited along the way. But the open stream of new games didn't quite develop as originally anticipated, and interest quickly shifted to more stable and less confusing markets.

Inside China, the amusement industry was in turmoil. Early on a lot of Asian business people invested in companies within China with the hopes of making a quick profit. But the industry was so new that many of the Chinese weren't even familiar with the games being sold to them. Redemption especially was difficult because tickets coming out of games was totally new to most of the players in the new arcades. Acceptability was slow and profits along with it. Frustrated investors began pulling out, leaving the market a mass of confusion with a very uncertain future.

Interest was still there, however, and several companies (mostly Taiwanese) took note. They saw that educating the public on game play and the idea of redemption could indeed bring about affordable amusement. Some of these Taiwanese companies invested in the amusement industry in China with long-term plans of building it into a popular and profitable business. The gap left by the early investors who pulled out was the perfect opportunity to allow legitimate companies to step in and stabilize the industry.

This is all good news for would-be ex-



porters who manufacture amusement machines. A solid, reputable, concentrated market is growing in mainland China. Taiwanese insiders caution that this market will be different from those that U.S. game manufacturers have sold to in the past. A certain amount of patience and creativity will have to be exercised if games are to be sold on a regular basis to China.

Indeed, the high import duties and copycat manufacturers will have to be dealt with. Currently the market is mostly used equipment, 90 percent of all games on location in China are used pieces. Of that 90 percent, the majority (80 percent) are video games from Japan and the balance is made up of redemption games from the United States.

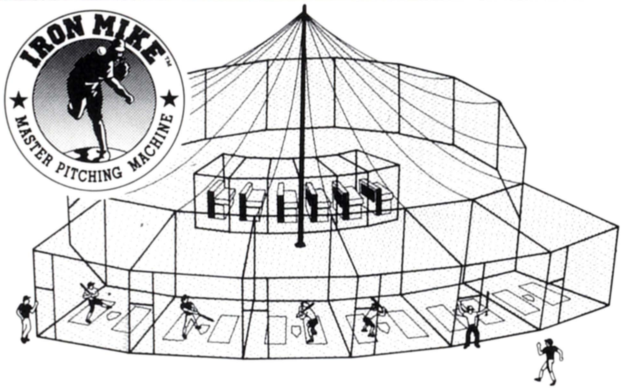
The potential exists for a thriving market though. Just how much potential there really is depends on the ability of forming partnerships with reputable companies in that region. Since the high import duties exclude new game purchases for the most part, another avenue of getting new releases into China must be explored. One strong possibility is for U.S. game manufacturers to form a partnership with a company in china who can manufacture, distribute, and service amusement machines. The idea is to provide kits or spare parts and allow a local company to assemble completed games for sale not only in China but throughout southeastern Asia.

Many redemption game factories will remember this idea from a few years ago when the possibility first came about. Unfortunately, the timing was not right. Not only was the market too new in China for such an aggressive move, the factories in the United States were struggling with an uncertain market here. There simply was not enough capital for the manufacturers to invest in that type of an idea.

The timing may now be much better. The industry in China has begun to mature, and the investment capital needed could be significantly less than before. Anyone who wishes to do business in mainland China through this method should exercise caution. First, find a reputable Asian distributor to guide the efforts. There are many a people throughout China who are hungry for good family entertainment. With a little patience and creativity, this could be a very handsome market for amusement game manufacturers. If you're looking to keep a factory busy or a distribution business more active, explore this opportunity.

Sometimes good ideas are better the second time around. I wouldn't count out the possibility of several top U.S. game manufacturers getting involved in the China market through this method. Indeed, we all could stand just a little more business! ▲

Entropy International and Entropy USA have been in the amusement industry for more than 20 years. Tony Yeh is vice president of marketing for the International company and Jeff Blair is the chief operating office for the USA group. Entropy is involved in the design and manufacture of coin-op games and parts. They can be reached at (908)506-0002, (800)241-0633, e-mail (entropyusa@-sprynet.com) or Web site (www. entropyusa.com).



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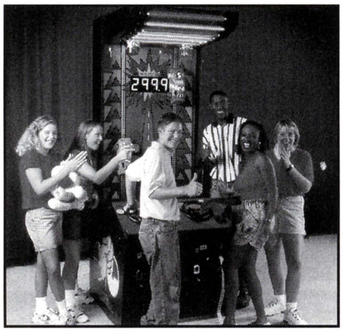

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UP FRONT

PARK VISIT *is full of* SURPRISES

It was hard to conceal my disappointment when I walked into the Coney Island Boardwalk at Astroworld in Houston, Texas. For a world-class park I expected more up-to-date games and a redemption counter that would take my breath away. No dice on both counts.

Laser tag was available but the traditional coin-op games, set on 50-cent play, were not of recent vintage except for a few video simulators. The redemption counter was small and filled with slum merchandise only.

Granted, tourists probably make up a major share of visitors, but local citizens purchase annual passes to the park. Surely these people would save up for larger prizes if they were presented with the opportunity. It could be that a well-stocked redemption counter with bigger prizes is considered competition for the midway games where players may be able to win a regulation-size basketball or giant stuffed animal.

When I reached the carousel in the Alpine Village I was in for another disappointment. The horse I chose, and his companions, clearly were not held in high regard, judging by the amount of paint that had chipped away from their bodies. The ride was short and sluggish, not at all the experience a veteran rider of the "flying horses" anticipated. Didn't a similar happening inspire Walt Disney to create a new concept in amusement parks?

I am reminded of a recent cable TV program on the Discovery Channel in which an amusement park's carousel was called "the heart of the park." If that is the case, the heart of Astroworld needs bypass surgery. The carousel should be a celebrated part of the park, perhaps put in a more central location where more than the youngest children would be aware of its existence.

Astroworld could take a few tips from Jane Adkins of The Brass Ring Carousel Co., featured this month in an article on the operation of carousels in shopping mall locations.

Whenever I am in a city with one of The Brass Ring Carousel Co.'s carousels I'll be at the head of the line.

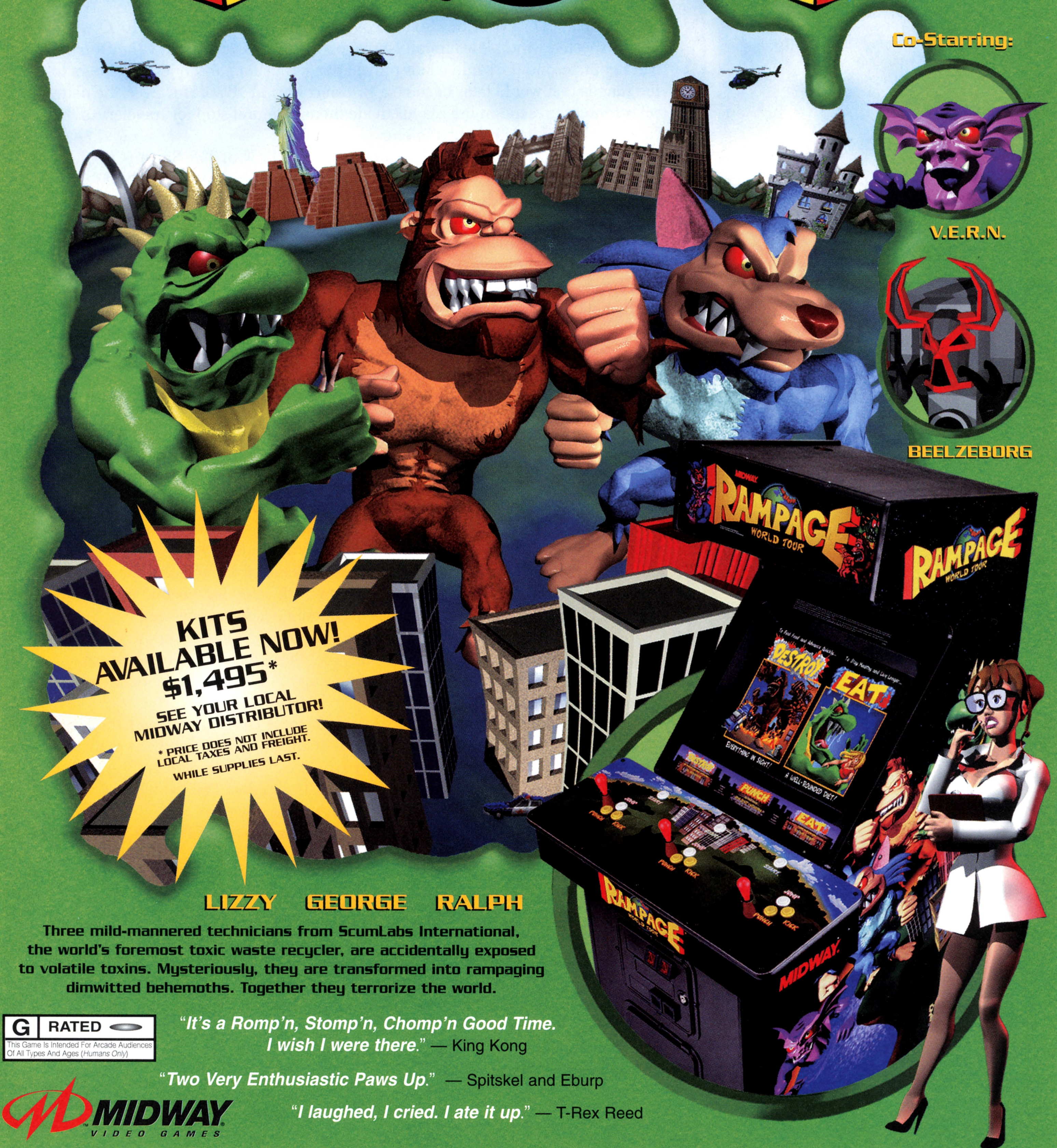
So what does all this have to do with the average coin game operator? It proves that even the well-known, grand-scale amusement facilities have room for improvement, and that maintaining the excitement and appeal of your facility (any facility) is an ongoing challenge. Since "maximize profits" is the rule of the day, everyone can start by keeping equipment meticulously clean and in good working order. That like-new look leaves a lasting impression just as strong as the one created by obvious neglect. ▲

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

Feel Dangerous
Death Breath

RAMPAGE
WORLD TOUR

Experience Monstrous
Mega Food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FROM LEFT FIELD

Exploring new worlds at home and abroad

Christopher Columbus first discovered the Cayman Islands in 1503 when an unexpected wind blew him off course on his way to what is now the Dominican Republic, and the same winds proved dangerous for subsequent explorers to the islands that would later become a British colony in 1670. However, the natural resources present on the islands made them a natural stop for travelers to the New World looking for nourishment.

Just last month I found myself standing on the bow of The Spirit of Ppalu, a 65-foot catamaran, plowing some of those very waters with a group of fellow travelers—all on hand compliments of Namco—in search of adventure.

Our first stop was Stingray City, a massive sandbar located at the far end of Grand Cayman's North Sound, and when we arrived my initial skepticism had flowered into full-blown apprehension. In short, I was scared, having grown up on a beach community in South Mississippi and learned to fear the creatures we were about to encounter up close and personal.

But in the end, the experience bore out Winston Churchill's famous quote about fear being its own worst enemy. The whole group—or at least most of us—were overcome by the friendliness of these "dreaded" sea creatures, and my fellow New Orleanian Bob Nims of AMA Distributing declared the experience "worth the whole trip."

However, as I returned to my office and day-to-day life, invigorated by a working vacation on that island paradise, I am faced with an even more daunting task: a new adventure in cyberspace.

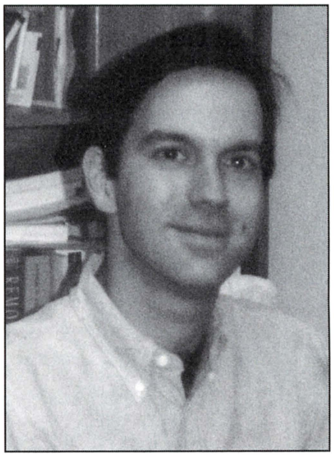
In addition to my current duties as associate editor, I have been charged by my peers with redesigning our World Wide Web site in hopes of better serving you, our readers. Play Meter has maintained a Web site for the last several years through the help of our trusted friend and exclusive technical writer Randy Fromm, who has gone out of his way to help us develop this second avenue for bringing our product to readers as part of his online industry megasite.

In keeping with those same goals, we plan to forge ahead, taking over the maintenance of our own site in the coming month so that we can better serve our loyal subscribers by delivering them the most up-to-date news and industry information available online.

While the details are still in the works or in some cases in my head, the basic plan is to publish encapsulated versions of the news as well as other timely stories on the Web site as we learn about them. These will complement the longer feature stories and other items such as top 10 "Equipment Poll" results we are already publishing on the Web. They will also give our readers the most up-to-date news stories, items they might otherwise have to wait for their next copy of Play Meter to learn about.

So like Columbus and the hordes of explorers to the New World that followed, I have set out on my adventure through cyberspace, hoping to avoid the ill winds that may blow through this untested space in hopes of utilizing the natural resources inherent in an emerging media and finding intellectual nourishment for myself and, in turn, our readers here at Play Meter.

Happy surfing, and catch us on the Web at (http:www.playmeter.com). ▲



Steve White
Associate Editor

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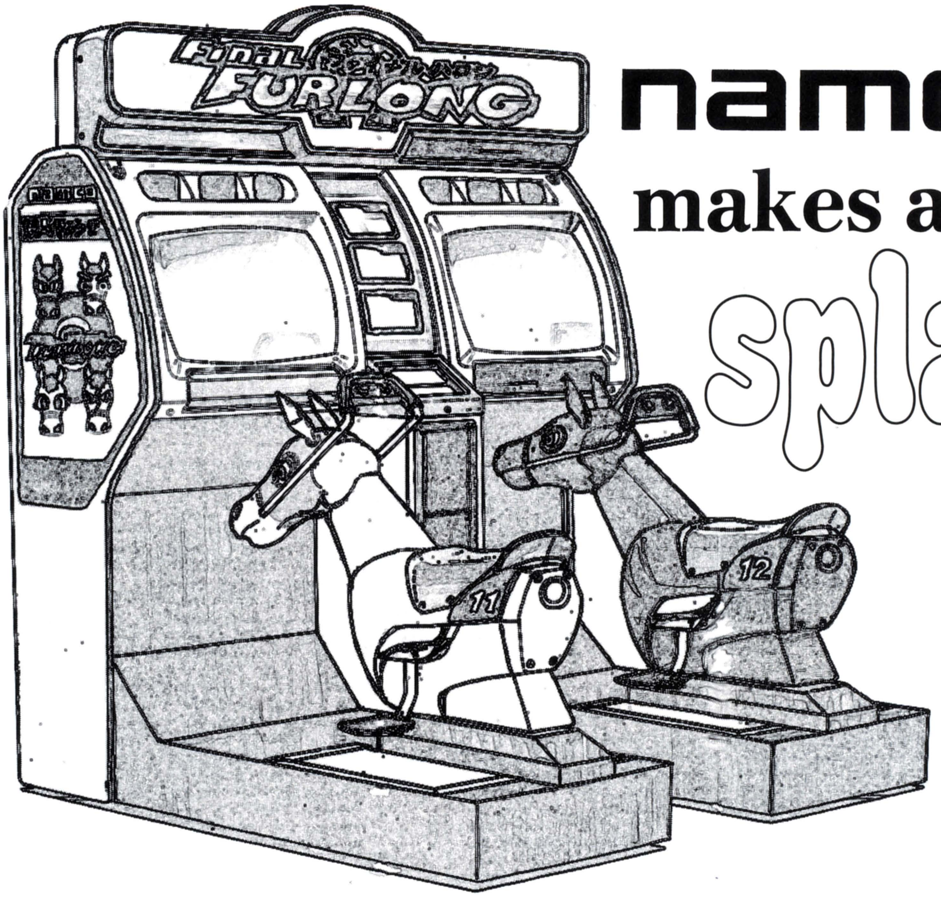


Namco's
Final Furlong

Sunny Grand Cayman, a British colony located south of Cuba in the Caribbean Sea, was the site of Namco Ltd.'s second annual international distributor meeting, attracting company customers from around the world.

"Since you, our partners, have helped us meet our goals this is a way of paying you back," Namco America's vice president of sales Frank Cosentino told those in attendance at the business meeting, where the company's newest product, the horse racing simulator game *Final Furlong*, was introduced.

Cosentino said the game was a logical extension of the company's line of high-tech, high-touch line of simulator games that have included *Aqua Jet, Alpine Racer, Alpine Surfer,* and *Prop Cycle.* "While our competitors are satisfied with recycling the same thing, we have continued to strive for innovation," he said.

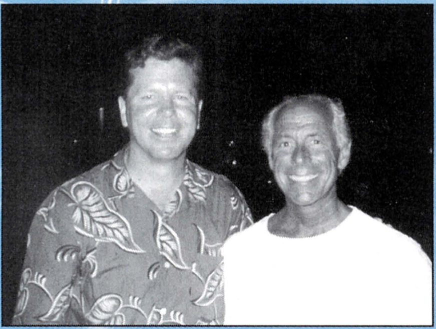
Such innovative products, according to Cosentino, as well as a tradition of video game players going back more than two decades have widened the player base to include Baby Boomers who got their first taste of video games in the `70s and `80s.

Namco Ltd. chairman Mr. Masaya Nakamura (l) sporting glitzy attire with Namco America executive vice president Mr. Kenji Hisatsune.

The company introduced its new horse racing simulator game *Final Furlong.*

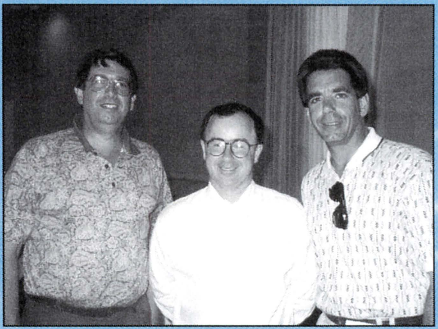
FINAL FURLONG

From left: Namco America president Kevin Hayes, Mondial International's Bruce and Saron Sarkisian, and Anne Hayes.



Michael Gatens (l) of Southgate Amusement & Vending and Ira Bettelman of C.A. Robinson.

A fine foursome, (l-r): Jerry Marcus of Atlas Distributing, Namco chairman Mr.Masaya Nakamura, Denise Marcus, and Namco's Mr. Kenji Hisatsune.



From left: Marc Haim of R.H. Belam, Kevin Hayes of Namco, and Tony Yula of Mondial Distributing.

Jacobo Shemaria of Mexel (r) with his wife Olga.

Namco sales representative David Swafford (r) and former AMOA government relations manager Laura Olson, who were married last month.

Michael Gatens (l) of Southgate is presented with the award for the western division of the United States by Namco's David Swafford (c) and Frank Cosentino.

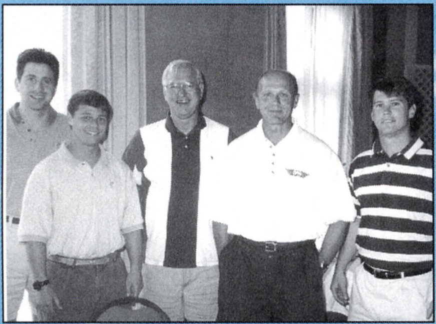
"Those kids have grown up and still like to play games," he added. "But this player needs more. We need to bring these new experiences if we are to survive."

Cosentino's words were echoed that evening by Namco Ltd.'s chairman and founder Mr. Masaya Nakamura, who donned a cap and sunglasses to present his speech to the crowd gathered for an evening dinner at Rum Point.

"I stand before you dressed totally different from my usual attire," chairman Nakamura said. "This represents an expression of my internal desire and determination for innovative changes as Namco approaches the 21st century which, as I have explained, is expected to be the era of spirituality. It is my hope that you will feel some of this movement not only from my speech but through my appearance."

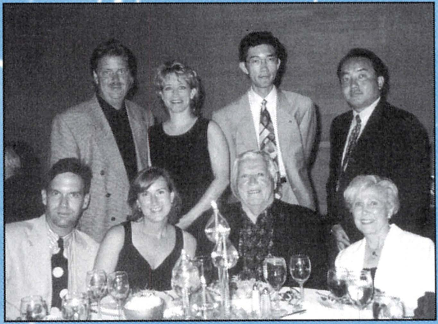
As part of its plans for the future, Namco is embarking on the production of motion pictures through a partnership in Dream Pictures as well as the recent acquisition of a Japanese movie studio. Chairman Nakamura said that the coming age of digital media will provide additional dimensions to the entertainment industry both in the areas of film and amusement games. "It is my firm belief that

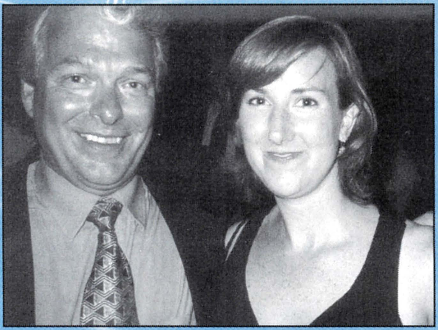
From left: Hal Lieberman of Lieberman Music, Jon W. Brady and Blair Norris of Brady Distributing, Peter Betti of H. Betti Industries, and Chris Brady of Brady Distributing.



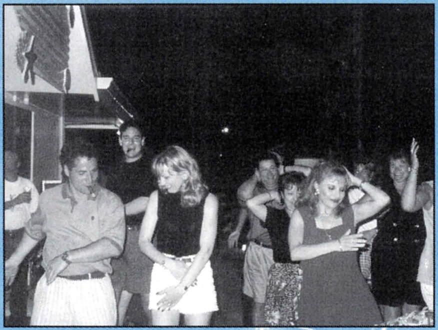
Bob Boals (l) of Beston Enterprises picks up the eastern United States distributor award from Namco's Tom Siemieniec (c) and Frank Cosentino.

At the awards banquet, (l-r): Play Meter's Steve and Abigail White and AMA Distributing's Bob and Jerri Nims (bottom); Duane and Barbara Miller of Warehouse of Games, and Namco's Mr. Takashi Kameda and Mr. Kenji Hisatsune.v

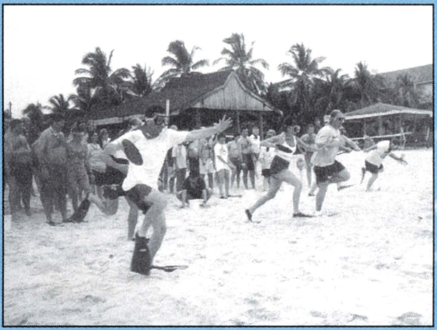




Canadian Coin's Jim Niblock with Play Meter's Abigail White.



An evening dinner at Grand Cayman's Rum Point culminated in dancing.



The beach Olympics presented new challenges for distributors.

movies and game entertainment have become inseparable," he concluded.

Namco's founder left the following day, earlier than planned, to meet with the president of Costa Rica, Jose Maria Figueres. Chairman Nakamura made the trip at the request of the Japanese government. In addition to the product introduction and the Rum Point dinner, distributors and members of the trade press were given an opportunity to tour the island, experience an Atlantis submarine ride, visit Stingray City on a sandbar in the North Bay, snorkel a barrier reef in the same body of water, play golf three days, and participate in a beach Olympics competition.

Along the way, they dined on gourmet fare ranging from Caribbean lobster and other island delicacies to sushi and fresh oysters. The event concluded with an awards banquet where Namco honored its international distributors as well as those from North America.

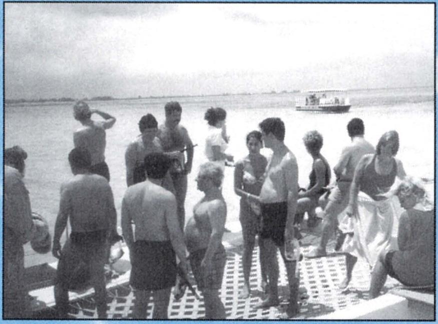
David Swafford of Namco presented the award for the western division of the United States to Michael Gatens of Southgate Amusement & Vending. Fellow Namco sales representative Tom Siemieniec presented the award for his eastern territory to Bob Boals representing Betson Enterprises. International sales representative Emilio Cabrera gave his award to Fernando Liao of Setto Games. A special award was also presented to representatives of American and Canadian Coin: Jim Danielson, Anne Winfield, and Jim Niblock.

The company's new game, *Final Furlong*, which is scheduled for delivery in late summer, can link as many as four players and is packaged in a unique cabinet featuring 29-inch monitors and two horses per cabinet. Players select one of three tracks, each of which varies in scenery and distance. There are also six movable horses to choose from, each with different qualities including two for novices, a front runner, a forward runner, a catch-up runner, and a counter runner.

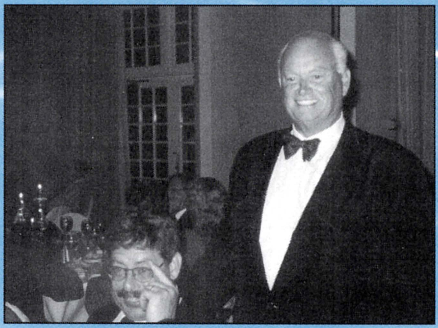
Players rock their horse back and forth using the reins lever to gain speed. There is also a whip button to maximize speed. The game challenges the competitor to pace his horse so that it doesn't lose stamina before it reaches the Spurt Point. In close races, the winner is determined by a photo finish feature, and each race is broadcast live to add to the thrill. Advice is given to each player at the end of the race on how to improve their riding skills.

The price point for *Final Furlong* had not been determined at press time. For more information, contact Namco America's sales office, 877 Supreme Drive, Bensenville, IL 60106; (630)238-2248; fax (630)238-9333. ▲

Activities included a snorkeling trip on the 65-foot Spirit of Ppalu.



Namco Europe's Shane Breaks was nattily dressed for the awards banquet.



Namco's David Swafford (l) and Frank Cosentino (r) present a special award to the American/Canadian Coin crowd, (l-r): Matt Davison, Ann Winfield, and Jim Niblock.

EXIME returns to product show format

The Exposicion Internacional de Maquinas de entretenimiento (EXIME) opens Aug. 13 at the World Trade Center in Mexico City, Mexico, as a full product show.

Last year the show was a tabletop event that still managed to draw a large number of buyers. Now, show organizers and exhibitors see signs of an economic rebound for the country hit hard in early 1995 by a monetary crisis that resulted in a devalued peso.

Exhibitors hope to make inroads in the recovering market. The peso has remained steady of late, retail sales are up, and consumer spending is on the rise.

The preliminary list of exhibitors includes Atari, Azkoyen Commercial Internacional, Design Plus, Dynamo Ltd., Imperial International, Incredible Technologies, Industrias Falgas, ICE, James Industries Mexico, Mars Electronics, Merit Industries, Mexel-Moy, Midway Mfg., Namco, NSM America, Nuevas Sinfonolas De Mexico, PlayNet, Rincon Musical, Rock-Ola Mfg., Rowe International, Southgate Amusement & Vending, Video Games Flight 23, Wells-Gardner, and Williams Electronics.

For more details on exhibit space, travel arrangements, and accommodations, contact William T. Glasgow Inc., (708)333-9292; fax (708)333-4086.

ITPS appoints Stults

John Stults has been appointed director of marketing and sponsorships for the International Theme Park Services' Terra Encantada project in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Stults will be the liaison between the ITPS corporate office and the Terra Encantada marketing staff. He joins Willie Garza, vice president of operations for ITPS, and Michael Mann, director of maintenance for ITPS, as members of the on-site management team.

Stults was previously with Sea World of Texas where he was partnership marketing director. He has logged 15 years in the leisure industry in marketing capacities with both the Busch Entertainment Corp. and Six Flags Theme Parks.

Dennis Speigel, president of ITPS, said, "We are pleased to welcome John to the ITPS family and we look forward to his leadership in the development of successful marketing programs for the Terra Encantada Theme Park.

Rowe unveils jukeboxes in Mexico and Brazil

Rowe International recently introduced its new jukebox line in Mexico at the sixth annual Rincon Musical/Rowe-AMi distributor meeting in Huatulco, Mexico, and through Rowe South America in San Paulo, Brazil.

In Huatulco, over 150 representatives were present from 30 Rincon/Rowe distributors throughout the country when Rincon president Enrique Calderon unveiled the new *LaserStar StarLight* and *MM-3* CD jukeboxes.

David Sadler, president and CEO of Rowe International, and Joel Friedman, executive vice president of Rowe/AMi were gratified by the response to the new products. Particular attention was paid to the infinity lighting of the *StarLight* and futuristic look of the *MM-3*.

Look for more on the Brazil introduction in the next issue.

StarLight
ROWE/AMi

David Sadler (l) of Rowe/AMi and Enrique Calderon of Rincon Musical prepare to unveil the *LaserStar StarLight*.

Latin Leisure '97 set for October

The Latin Leisure '97 trade conference is scheduled Sept. 30-Oct. 3 at The Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Fla. The show will focus on hotels and resorts (day one), casinos (day two), and amusement and theme parks (day three).

The first regional event of this kind, Latin Leisure '97 will afford an opportunity to learn about projects in key Latin American countries, take advantage of information on the world's most successful amusement parks, and establish key contacts with industry leaders.

Theme park topics will include opportunities for development, finance and investment, design, marketing, and technology. Among the notable speakers for this segment of the event are Bill Radtke, director of research for Leisure and Recreation Concepts (USA), David Needham, director of sales for SimEx Inc. (Canada), and Alain Baldacci, president of Parques Laser e Turismo (Brazil).

For more information, call (56-2)246-8101; to register, fax (56-2)246-8109.

Brazil gears up for Salex '97

A prosperous economy, the ninth largest in the world and a leader in Latin America, makes Brazil's annual Salex trade show an important event. This year show dates are July 25-27 at the Mart Centre in Sao Paulo.

Salex covers the entire coin-op amusement industry, the leisure and park industry, and the casino gaming industry in South America. The show has grown steadily since 1993.

According to show organizers, the country's amusement industry has been profitable since the relaxation of important regulations in 1992. Import duties were reduced to 20 percent for some products and zero percent on others. Public demand for amusements has increased since 1992. It's important to note that 50 percent of Brazil's population is between 12 and 25 years old.

For more information on the upcoming show, call +44 (0) 161-624-3687; fax +44 (0)161 665-1260; or e-mail (salex@worldsfair.co.uk).

Fariba Hozhabrafkan

Thomson taps Hozhabrafkan

Thomson Entertainment has appointed Fariba Hozhabrafkan to be head of projects and programs.

Hozhabrafkan will be responsible for managing all projects and bids that involve attraction development and theming as well as the specification of non-standard simulation products. She has extensive experience as a product line manager with the company.

Tuning moves into new home office

Tuning Electronic GmbH moved into its new headquarters at the end of June. Please note the address: Niendorfer Str. 181, D-22848 Norderstedt/Hamburg, Germany; +49-40-528-00-00; fax +49-40-528-00-028.

The company also has a Web site (http://www.tuning.com) and an e-mail address (tuning1@compuserve.com).

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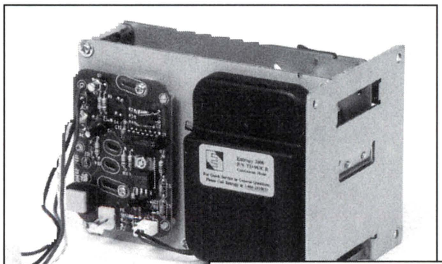

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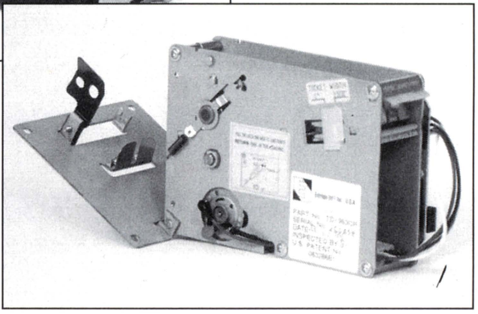

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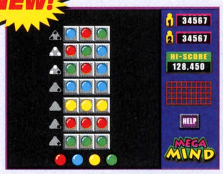
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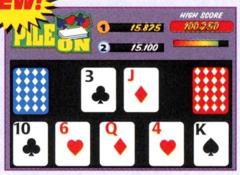
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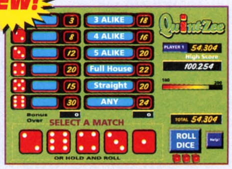
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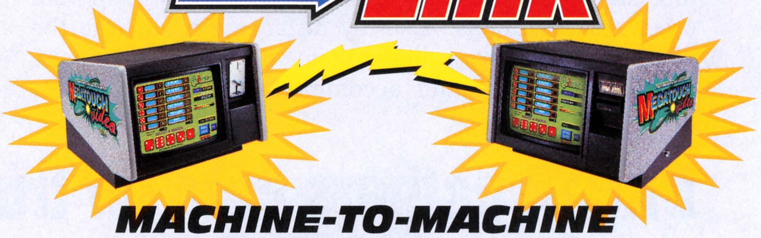
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ATE adds staff

ATE Ltd., organizers of the ATE International trade event, plans to expand its staff with the appointment of a sales manager and a deputy operations manager reporting to Dawn Millroy, ATE operations manager.

ATE chief executive Peter Rusbridge said, "The continued successful development of the London show means that in effect we are dealing with three separate events—the main body of ATEI, the international casino exhibition, and the area devoted to parks, rides, and FEC equipment. Clearly, to continue to provide the same high levels of service that our exhibitors expect and deserve it is vital that we reinvest in this way."

Millroy affirms the importance of service: "The philosophy of ATE is that we don't have a right to anyone's business. It doesn't matter how long the show's been going, or how good it has been in the past, each year we have to earn our customers' business, and when people start pouring through the registration desks we can relax a little and start thinking about how we can improve it for next year."

The 1998 show dates are Jan. 27-29. Traditional dates of the last Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of January are confirmed up to the year 2003.

IMA breaks with tradition

IMA, the European international trade fair for amusement and vending machines that traditionally hosts its event in late January in Frankfurt, Germany, has decided to change its 1998 show dates to Nov. 18-21.

Show organizers plan to continue with this late November schedule through 2007. Frankfurt will still be the host city, but the fair will move to the larger Hall 8 at the Frankfurt Fairgrounds that will allow IMA to expand over one level in a more modern facility.

In making the decision, top priority was given to better premises, weather conditions, and traffic logistics, along with other considerations. Also, by distancing itself from the ATEI, which follows a similar theme in London in January, the show should better accommodate international exhibitors and guests.

IT'S NO secret

☛ Konami Co. Ltd. is expanding with the construction of a three-story amusement game factory in Nishi-ku Kobe City, Japan. The company's Zama factory, which produced both amusement and gaming machines, now will specialize in gaming product. In addition, Konami has opened offices in Shanghai, Tianjun, and Dalian, China, to add to its offices in Beijing and Hong Kong.

☛ The United Kingdom Gaming Board has granted a license to Interlotto UK to operate video-based lottery games. The move is being considered a threat to the AWP (amusement with prizes) machines that are prolific in the country.

☛ Capcom Co. Ltd. of Osaka, Japan, has the exclusive sales rights for Midway's *Cruis'n' World* for Japan. Capcom had a similar arrangement in 1991 when it distributed American Laser Game's *Mad Dog McCree.*

☛ Potsdamerplatz in Berlin, Germany, is the European spot chosen for Sony Retail Entertainment's new location based entertainment concept. The $900 million entertainment complex, slated to open in 2000, is expected to offer food and beverages, retail stores, eight cinemas, and an IMAX attraction.

☛ Japan's National Police Agency has rejected requests from the Japan Amusement Machine Manufacturers Association to relax certain parts of the country's Fuei Act that hold amusement arcades to the same licensing requirements as pachinko and medal game parlors that offer slot machines and video poker games. JAMMA wants to clearly define and separate the different kinds of locations.

☛ U.S. electronic darts company Medalist is looking to establish a presence in Europe. It has appointed Interactive Entertainment Partners to be its exclusive European distributor. IEP appointed Brendan Breaks to head the London office.

☛ In the spring Namco Ltd. of Tokyo, Japan, experimented with linking its *Rave Racer* driving games in arcades in Tokyo and Osaka via high-speed optical fiber cable. While the test was successful, the high cost of this communication method precludes it from widespread use.

BACTA gathers data for true industry picture

BACTA, the British amusement trade organization, is preparing for the installation of new government officials by updating information on the industry to provide an up-to-date picture.

According to the association's newsletter, Gameplan, "The association intends to develop a robust social case for amusement machines—balancing the view that only the National Lottery benefits good causes. The fact that many pubs, workingmen's and political clubs, coastal communities, leisure centers, university unions, and other organizations could not survive without their income from machines is an unsung story."

An information committee has been established to survey members and compile reliable statistics that will be available for decision-makers in the government as well as the media.

In his monthly message to members, BACTA president Russell Smith asked for cooperation in the gathering of data, saying, "The government needs facts and figures on which to base its judgments and we need reliable statistics to back up our arguments. Trade associations which wish to build trust with government must be able to offer sound, well-researched, statistical information."

The intent, Smith affirms, is to tell "the considerable social contribution made by amusement machines."

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

JULY 25-27
Salex '97, Mart Centre, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Call +44 (0)161-624-3687; fax +44 (0)161-665-1260.

AUGUST 13-14
EXIME, World Trade Center, Mexico City, Mexico. Call William T. Glasgow Inc., (708)333-9292; fax (708)333-4086.

AUGUST 27-29
Asian Amusement International Theme Parks & Attractions '97, Singapore, World Trade Centre. Call Tony Chan, (65)222-8550; fax (65)224-6328.

SEPTEMBER 18-21
JAMMA, International Exhibition Centre, Tokyo, Japan. Call +81-3-3438-2363; fax +81-3-5472-7115.

SEPTEMBER 25-29
China Amusement Expo, Beijing Exhibition Centre, Beijing PRC. Call Rebecca Chan, (852)2865-2633; fax (852)2866-1770 or (852)2866-2076.

SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 2
International Leisure Industry Week, NEC, Birmingham, England. Call +44-1932-564455; fax +44-1932-560009.

OCTOBER 1-3
FER-Interazar '97, Parque Ferial, Juan Carlos 1. Madrid, Spain. Call +34-3-416-1466; fax +34-3-415-0095.

OCTOBER 16-19
ENADA '97, Rome Fairgrounds, Rome, Italy. Call (06)440-17-18; fax (06)440-27-18.

OCTOBER 22-25
Amusement Park China '97, China World Trade Center, Beijing, China. Call Reed Exhibition Companies, Export Division, (203)840-5355; fax (203)840-9570.

OCTOBER 24-26
5th Park Show, Rimini, Italy. Contact Rimini Trade Fair Corp., +39-541-711-240; fax +39-541-711-519.

NOVEMBER 6-9
Australia Amusement Expo, Marriott Surfers Paradise Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. Contact Ken Priest, 61-7-3841-1021; fax 61-7-3841-1332. ▲

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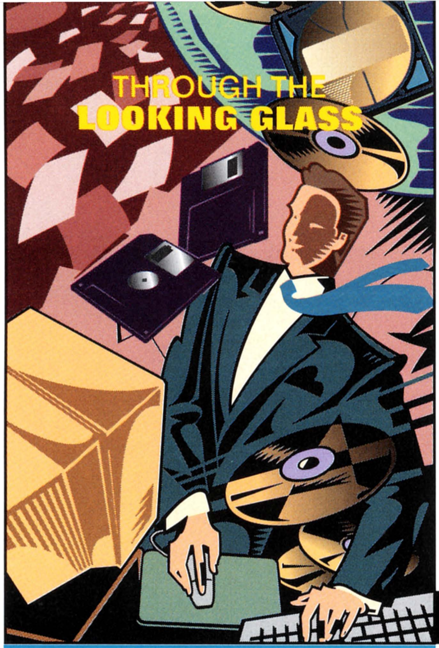


Game developers

SEEK OPPORTUNITY IN THE arcade

Much of the enthusiasm over a PC-based video game platform has centered around the re-usable nature of the hardware and the wider availability of content that architecture will foster. However, one of the big questions is who will provide this content. This month, we talked with four companies looking to throw their hat into the coin-op ring.

STEVE WHITE

All four of the companies expressed an interest in both the traditional coin-op market and the location-based entertainment (LBE) industry as a viable avenue for marketing their products on a PC platform. However, a consensus has yet to emerge on how these new products will be sold to the marketplace.

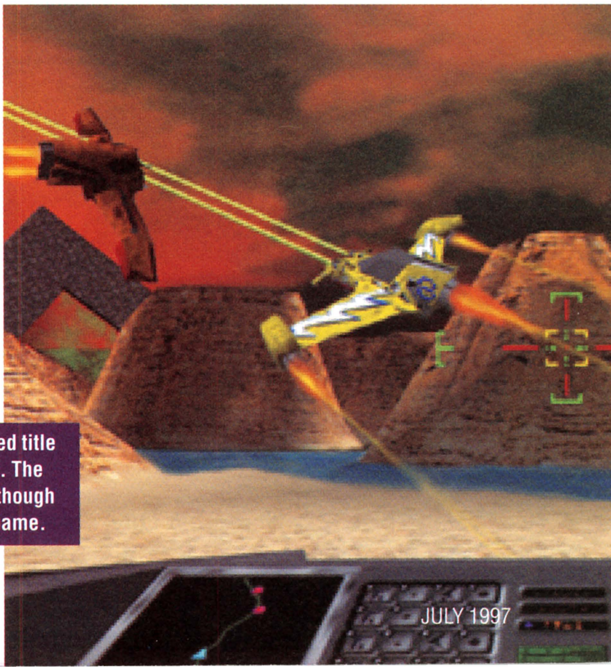
A number of the companies share a common background in developing high-end interactive entertainment products on proprietary systems such as Silicon Graphics' Reality Engine, and all seem to agree that advances in PC technology have for the first time made such products profitable for locations other than large theme parks with massive throughput.

"The whole industry didn't do well (before) because of the cost of the rendering equipment," explained Brad Hunt, president of Angel Studios. "We were waiting for the PC breakthrough and it started happening last year with 3Dfx."

"It's really a good deal for everybody along the food chain," added Joan Wood of the three-person development firm Mango Grits. "There's nobody paying the price for others to make a profit."

Another common thread among these companies, some of which have already been involved in developing game content for the home PC industry, is a recognition of the marketing potential the out-of-home industry offers for consumer sales.

"Most software companies understand the value-added na-



GreyStone Technology showed its first PC-based title at the Computer Game Developers Conference. The prototype was being called *Canyon Runner,* although the final product out next fall will have a new name.

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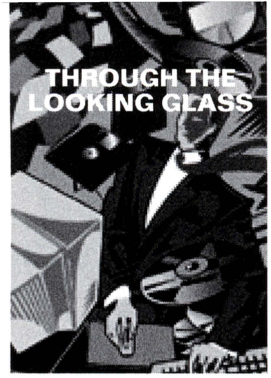


ture of developing software for the out-of-home market and then offering that to the in-home market,” noted David Klugh of GreyStone Technology.

This commonality of vision, however, belies larger questions about how the traditional structures of the coin-op marketplace will accommodate this new system of delivery and whether new strategies such as revenue sharing, sliding scale royalties, and advertising can succeed. “I think that part is wide open at this point,” said Wood.

Mango Grits

The smallest of the companies profiled, Burbank, Calif.,-based Mango Grits, also appears to be the one closest to releasing a title for the coin-op and LBE industries. This flying simulator-type experience, which was displayed at the Computer Game Developers Conference under the title *Stringer*, has been in development for the last year. Test versions are scheduled for release this summer, according to the company.

> **“MOST SOFTWARE COMPANIES UNDERSTAND THE VALUE-ADDED NATURE OF DEVELOPING SOFTWARE FOR THE OUT-OF-HOME MARKET AND THEN OFFERING THAT TO THE IN-HOME MARKET.”**

The company, Joan Wood said, was already beginning to focus on the possibility of developing coin-op and LBE experiences on a PC when Microsoft and Intel began taking a serious look at the industry. “It was a combination of timing and we just happened to be there first with viable content,” she explained. “We are sort of a throwback to the old-style development community that goes into their garage and comes out a year later with a game.”

Ironically, this self-proclaimed “garage band-type organization” got its start developing content on a $250,000 Silicon Graphics Reality Engine with little success. “We showed at IAAPA in 1993, but it was just too expensive,” Wood recalled. “That gave us the experience to jump into this. Now you can do the same types of things on a PC. That opened the door for LBE and in the middle of that is coin-op. Literally, I went to the Computer Game Developers Conference last year and picked out the chipset we were going to develop on. We knew we were going to do this.”

While Wood and her counterparts, Michel Royer and Spencer Levy, may have been working on their game since last summer, they have only recently considered quitting their “day jobs” and pursuing the opportunity full time. The time is now right and the market is ripe, they say.

“We are really going to have to demonstrate this is a viable option,” Wood conceded. “If somebody does it badly, it will be bad for everybody. We have a lot of respect for what it takes to make a good coin-op game. We’re going to do a lot of testing without a lot of publicity. We’re not going to rush to market.”

In addition to offering games for the traditional coin-op market, Mango Grits is working with motion platform manufacturer Jessler Enterprises to produce LBE experiences that it says will be priced lower than high-end coin-op driving simulators. Those systems are scheduled for deployment this summer.

According to Wood, the company, which has produced the Siberia and Siberia II home titles, envisions a regular summer release for high-end arcade games with consumer sales of the title selling around Christmas. Mango Grits is currently talking with a number of game publishers about marketing coin-op and LBE games.

“Because we have had to pioneer this path, we are in a position to do it ourselves,” explained Wood. “The products will get to market one way or another. Either a publisher will take over, or we will do it ourselves.”

A similar attitude prevails when discussing coin-op distribution: “It depends on what state those channels are in when we enter the market. Not much has been done to make viable re-usable” hardware in the coin-op market, Wood said.

When asked about the economics of the coin-op industry, Wood said the company foresees revenue from an arcade version paying for its own development and marketing for both in-home and out-of-home. Beyond that, the promotional opportunities will fuel interest in subsequent home sales.

“If that happens, it will satisfy our business plan,” she concluded. “I don’t think it’s reasonable for it to finance the whole home PC development. Obviously, if you do put out an arcade hit, everybody can retire.”

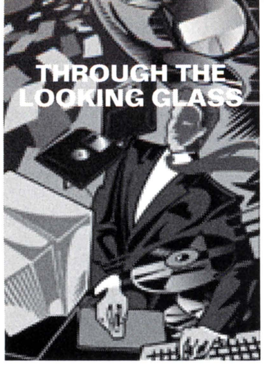
Angel Studios

With a background in computer animation, special effects, and the introduction of military technology into the entertainment industry, Angel Studios in Carlsbad, Calif., is poised to bring its experience in developing quality content to the amusement game business, claims company president Brad Hunt. In fact, it has already done so with several title releases for the Nintendo 64 console system.

According to Hunt, the development of a PC arcade specification will now allow the 70-person development company to enter a market that had been previously closed to outsiders.

“The first reference platform (released by Intel at the CGDC) exceeds the quality of the machines that Sega and Namco were putting out last year,” he said, adding that the big coin-op manufacturers are getting closer to the Silicon Graphics model. “We are just going after those quarters. All we have to do is write an entertainment title to the reference platform and if it’s a good game it will work. What’s scary is how Sega and Namco react.”

While Angel is currently working



on at least one title for the arcade, Hunt said he could not reveal any details at the time of the interview. The company is also working on several LBE experiences, although not necessarily using PC technology.

As part of its long-term plan, Angel intends to produce games that will run the gamut of player appeal, including some adventure titles with educational value as well as non-violent experiences for females with game play that includes more story and character development, themes centered around animals and protection, and story elements such as riding instead of racing and touching instead of fighting.

"We are really looking at doing something for the arcade that girls will like," said Hunt. "That's the big untapped market."

However, all of those ideas are moot, he added, without the deployment of hardware, and that will only be driven by the introduction of popular PC-based arcade games. Once the hardware has been placed on location, a whole range of developers may then be willing to look to the coin-op market as a source for content distribution.

"It's all about having an installed based and low-risk distribution," Hunt explained. "So we're doing traditional coin-op titles as a way of low-risk entrance to the industry."

Hunt also said that a PC-based system will open the doors to non-traditional pricing structures that give the developer "a sense of ownership" and a share of the coin drop, thereby giving them a vested interested in the performance of the game.

GreyStone Technology

GreyStone Technology is a San Diego, Calif., based company which designs, develops, and markets software used to generate real-time, interactive, and networked 3-D digital content, principally for the entertainment and defense markets. In pursuing these goals, GreyStone applies its skills and experience in using real-time distributed and networked interactivity, 3-D graphics, artificial intelligence, and physics-based behavioral modeling to create software which enables participants to interact realistically in a simulated environment.

Not unlike both Mango Grits and Angel Studios, GreyStone's roots in the entertainment industry also stem from the application of military technology and the use of Silicon Graphics and other high-end technology.

In fact, the company has produced four Silicon Graphics experiences including a Jurassic Park-themed dinosaur flight simulation debuted at Siggraph `93; the Virtual Voyage VR promotional experience for Cutty Sark brand scotch; and *Magball*, a commercial entertainment simulator introduced at IAAPA `95.

"These were high-end environments and they all worked well on the Silicon Graphics platform," explained the company's David Klugh. "The problem was it was very expensive and fit a narrow niche. It certainly wasn't enough to produce anything in mass. It was good for a one-time production application."

But the last two years have seen the price point for technology fall drastically, said Klugh, and that has made it possible to produce graphically powerful interactive technology products for the home and arcade. "At the same time we can now do specialized (high-end) applications and the cost is much lower," he added.. "Our policy has always been to look at the tools available on a case by case basis. Things can always change in the computer world."

That policy led GreyStone to consider the possibility of producing entertainment experiences on a PC at the same time that computer giants Microsoft and Intel began exploring the out-of-home commercial entertainment industry.

"We've been looking at this for a number of years," said Klugh. "We needed to climb our learning curve. Intel has been an excellent vehicle to get there."

Intel also provided a showcase in its booth at the GGDC earlier this year for GreyStone to preview its first PC-based title, which was initially dubbed *Canyon Runner*, a large-scale simulator game that draws players into the depths of a dangerous ravine. Klugh said the game will be available in final form next spring at the Amusement Showcase International, and it will be available in scaled versions for large and small locations. Look for another preview at this year's International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions trade show and convention.

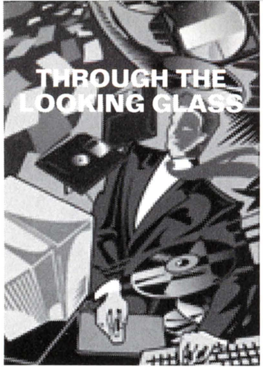
According to Klugh, this is just the first in a series of PC-based products, which the company hopes to release for the arcade, LBE, and home markets, one each year. "We would like to have a situation where our software is applicable on a number of different hardware platforms," he said. "This is all evolving into a concept of social entertainment geared toward a mix of clientele."

What that means, Klugh said, is more games of higher quality for a wide range of location types, "a total electronic entertainment package" where technology meets the social demands of today's consumer.

He points to recent location openings such as XS New York and Sega GameWorks, and even the tried and true model of Dave & Buster's where cutting-edge fun is fused with traditional entertainment values. This will not be a world dominated by so-called twitch games.

"The applications in these advanced LBE markets are going to appeal to a different market," Klugh predicted. "People want to be entertained by the

"PEOPLE WANT TO BE ENTERTAINED BY THE TECHNOLOGY BUT THEY ALSO WANT TO SOCIALIZE."



technology but they also want to socialize. We're convinced of these things. We've seen them work."

Interplay Productions

Founded in 1983 as a software developer, Interplay Productions in Irvine, Calif., is one of the largest software developers and publishers of award-winning entertainment and educational software for IBM, Windows 95, and Apple Macintosh as well as for Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation, and Nintendo 64. The company, under its subsidiary, Interplay OEM, represents over 300 titles exclusively, from leading developers and publishers from around the globe to its wide variety of hardware customers.

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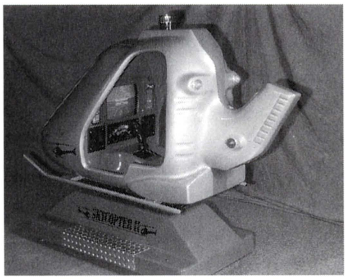

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Shiny Entertainment, developer of the consumer hit video game Earthworm Jim was acquired by Interplay Productions in 1995 and remains headquartered in Laguna Beach, Calif. Shiny owns the worldwide trademarks to the patented Animotion process that takes cartoon animation and places it directly into interactive entertainment software. Launched in 1995, the VR Sports division develops and publishes state-of-the-art, realistic sports software for both game console systems and personal computers. VR Sports releases products using state-of-the-art, real-time, 360-degree 3-D sports software.

Interplay's PC titles include the hit Descent, as well as Bomberman, Descent II, Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Enhanced, and Star Trek: Judgment Rites. Phil Adam, vice president of new development, said the company took a look at coin-op as a way "to increase presence as well as expanding our revenue base."

The company does, in fact, have some coin-op titles in the works, but nothing for public consumption yet. Adam said the company will only do "specific titles with the right partners...partners already involved in the business. It's too risky to invest much in a market on the decline."

When looking at the benefits on producing coin-op titles, Adam said they are twofold: "Promotion and brand recognition first, but with the right properties we believe they can be money makers."

Additionally, the company already has experience with large scale commercial experiences, having worked with Sega GameWorks on a location-based version of Descent for its premier facility.

"LBE makes sense for certain titles like Descent especially because of its multiplayer capability," Adam added. "It's a little better match for PC publishers used to longer play experiences." ▲

For more information, contact associate editor Steve White, (504)488-7003; fax (504)488-7083; e-mail (news@playmeter.com).

Something
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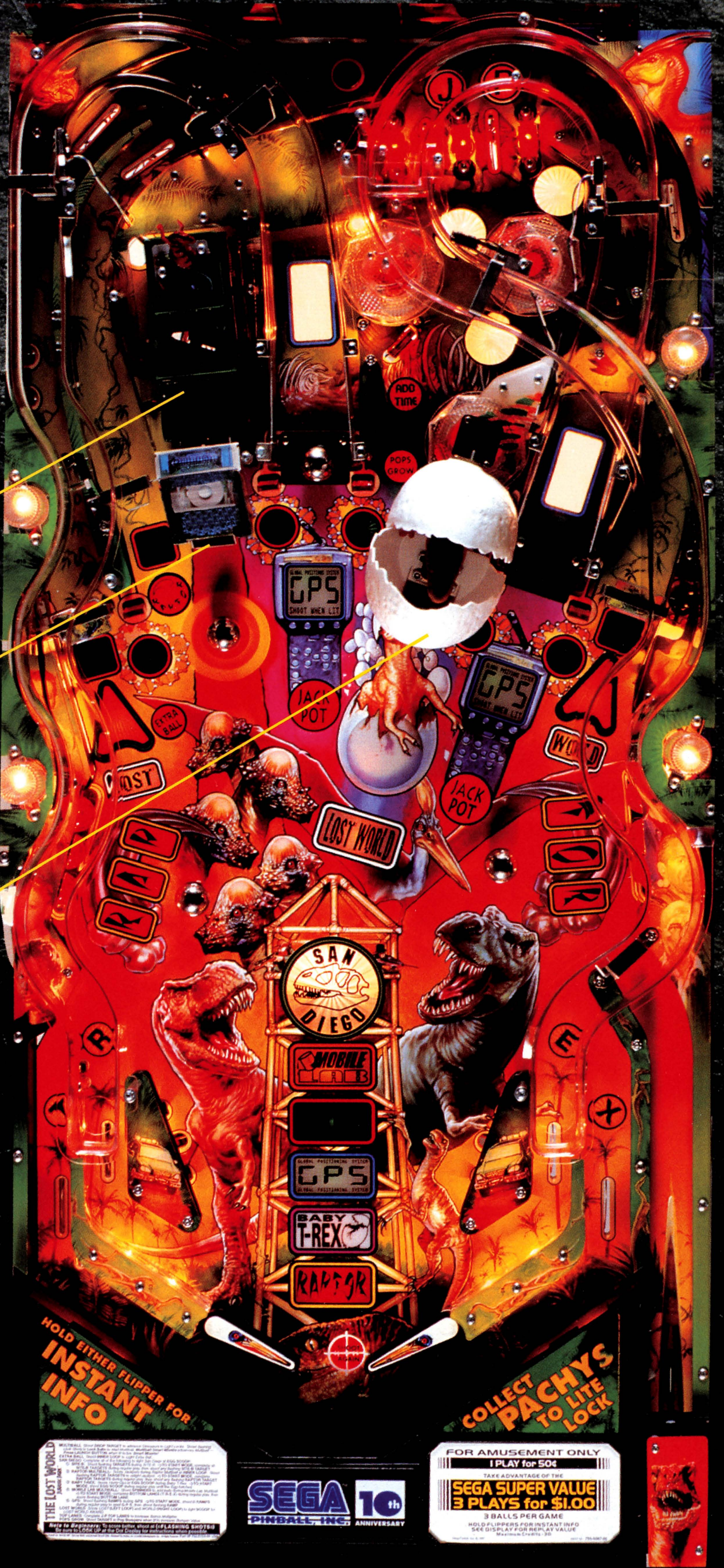
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Dynamo sheds new light on traditional game

Dynamo Ltd. has again proven to be an innovator with its new table game, *Blacklight Pool*, that is sure to attract new players to the game once they see its bright neon yellow trim and specially designed and manufactured balls that appear to float on the dark felt surface.

Younger players, particularly females, in teen clubs, FECs, and arcades will respond favorably to the head-turning new look.

Dynamo invested a year in surveying players, distributors, FEC owners, industry insiders, and marketing consultants before putting the finishing touches on *Blacklight Pool.*

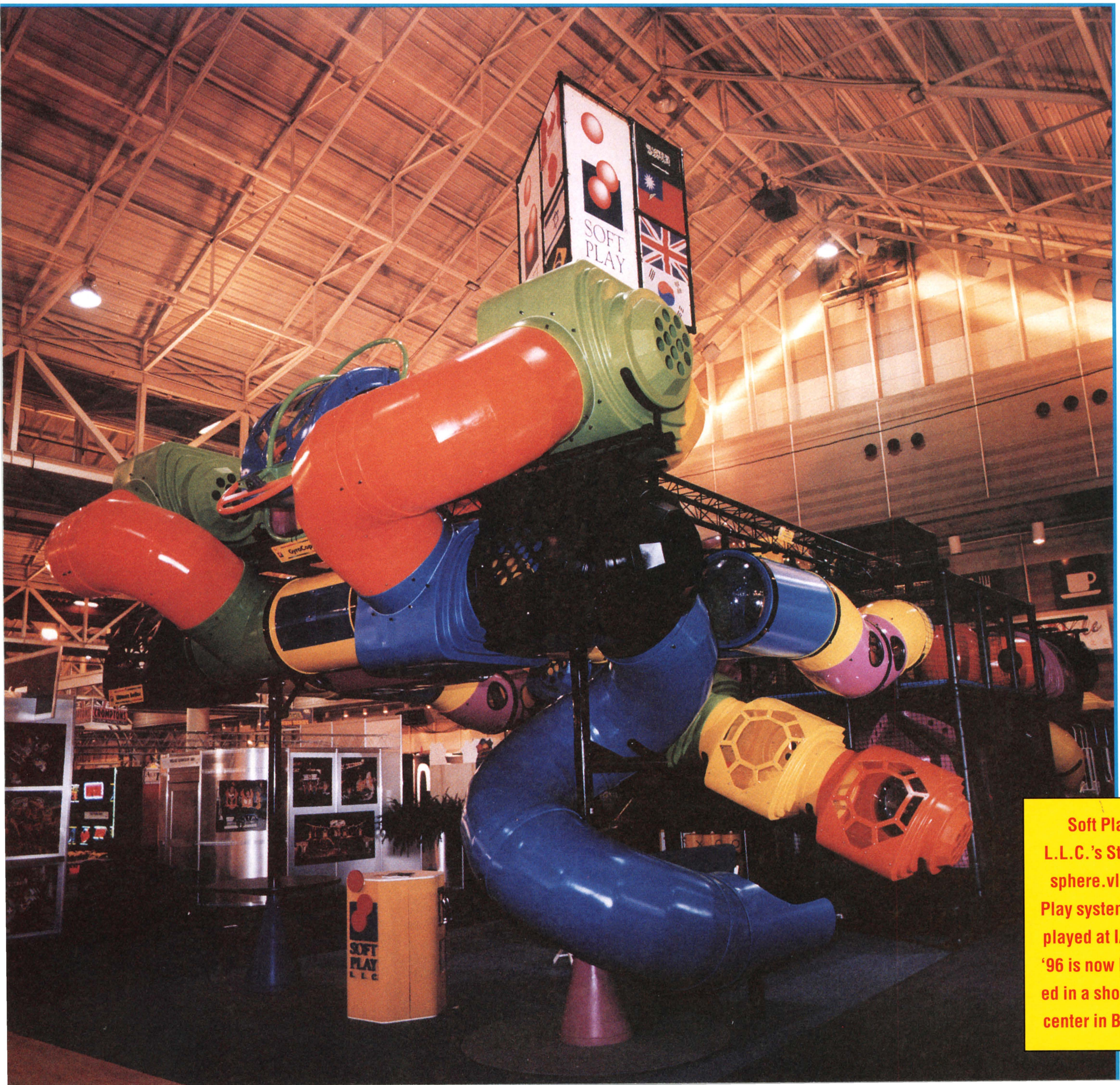
A major influencing factor in the decision to build this model was the recent boom in black-lite bowling. All indicators pointed toward designing a table that puts the emphasis on fun rather than competition.

The result is a pool table that is eminently suited to FECs, bowling centers, movie theaters, miniature golf facilities, college campuses, and game rooms everywhere as well as traditional locations like bars, pool halls, and restaurants.

Dynamo backs up its research with a demographic survey of the top five new markets for *Blacklight Pool* that emphasizes present trends. Anyone interested in obtaining this data can fax a request for the Demographic Stat Pack on company letterhead, call or write: Dynamo Ltd., 2525 Handley-Ederville Road, N. Richland Hills, TX 76118; (800)516-0042; (817)284-0114; fax (817)284-7606, or on the Internet (http://www.dynamo-ltd.com). ▲

HOW TO IMPROVE THE SOFT MODULAR PLAY EXPERIENCE

BONNIE THEARD


SOFT PLAY
SOFT PLAY L.L.C.

Soft Play L.L.C.'s Stratosphere.vl Air-Play system displayed at IAAPA '96 is now located in a shopping center in Brazil.

Soft modular play structures like this one from Soft Play L.L.C. are appearing in new sites such as this video store in Tulsa, Okla.

As the market matures, what are parents and children looking for in soft modular play structures? How can operators with older structures stay competitive? What lies ahead?

To find out the answers to these questions and to get a grip on the future of this market, we contacted several major manufacturers with track records to match their solidly constructed play units.

There is no doubt that the market has matured, customers are more sophisticated, and new types of locations are responding to the entertainment possibilities offered by the colorful and adaptable play units that delight children and often allow space for parents to join in the fun.

SOFT PLAY L.L.C.

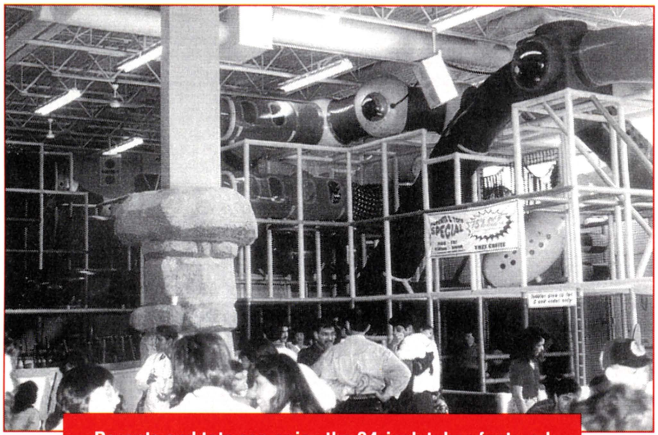
Jim Deitzel, media coordinator for the Charlotte, N.C.-based manufacturer, stressed several key points:

We find that children want interactive play, something that moves so they can use their imaginations. Operators want something that will keep children entertained and features low maintenance and durability, especially in restaurant settings.

Some places like theming the unit, but our philosophy is different. We prefer not to theme units because that way children can imagine what the unit might be—a spaceship one day or a submarine the next day.

To assist operators we offer our Replay Program which includes a consultation and physical inspection of the unit. Suggestions for improvement can range from expansion to adding new components or replacing padding and netting. Adding new parts and replacing worn parts help keep operators competitive. We use the standard size tubes so we can apply this program to almost any play unit in the field.

The market is evolving, not softening. Stand-alone en-



Parents and tots can enjoy the 34-inch tubes featured in this Prime Play Systems unit at Crash Crawly's in Coquitlam, B.C. Canada.

tertainment centers may not be the ideal locations anymore. Shopping malls are wonderful opportunities, also car dealers and health clubs. A lot of development is going on in shopping malls where entertainment is growing. We feel the soft contained play market has great potential there; we have installed quite a few units in shopping malls across the country already.

We are looking to build units that require less maintenance, offer higher durability, and include new shapes and components. We are responding to the market demands.

PRIME PLAY SYSTEMS

Jason Wharrie, president and CEO of the Port Coquitlam, B.C. Canada company, focused on new innovations such as motion and sound, larger tubes, and slides that have neat noises as elements that add to the adventure quotient in soft modular playgrounds. Wharrie covered a lot of history and new ground:

Four or five years ago there were bright colors and simple activities. Now the market demands much more to capture a child's imagination. That's why we are adding more audio and video to our playgrounds. We are able to put monitors inside the playgrounds so kids can see and talk to other kids in different areas as they are playing. We incorporated fiberglass characters in and on our units to suit various themes, such as our underwater Atlantis theme.

When you incorporate theming and put in visuals and sound (waves and thunder, for example) it's a whole new experience for children. They have a good imagination, but if you enhance it a little bit more it's greater fun for them. We're putting in educational elements so we're not just promoting physical fitness; we want to foster education and fun at the same time. And we recommend a good size toddler area for children age five and under. The first step is to have something for the toddlers. They are a much bigger market than people gave them credit for before.

Four years ago we came out with 34-inch diameter tubes that have proven so popular they now represent most of our business. Kids want to go play in the bigger playground where they can maneuver easily. And larger tubes mean parents can join their children.

All those soft modular playgrounds in the field can be updated to recapture the imagination of the children who have been frequenting them. It can be tiring to continually see the same play structure. Kids who started coming when they were three are now eight years old and are still customers.

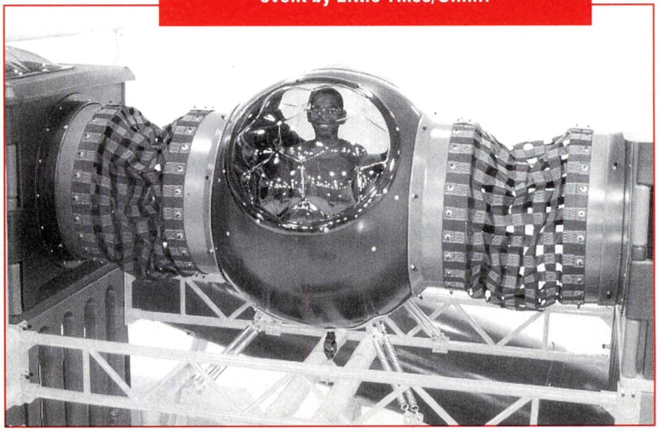
Children are exposed to computers and technology at such a young age. You can't compare the activities for children today to those available to previous generations. We had a grass field and a swing, and now there are fantastic FECs all around the country that parents can take their kids to where they can learn and grow mentally and physically in a safe environment.

Creating that environment requires careful planning. We sit down with customers to look at the demographics and help them with budgeting, first year cash flow analysis, and financing options to determine whether what they have in mind will be a feasible project. What often happens is that people see a fun center in a densely populated area and think it's going to work anywhere. They will work in all places, but not the same kind will work in all places.

> ***"Gigantic play systems over four years old are dated and will not keep up with the new play events and themed components now being offered."***

The most important thing to realize is the cost involved. We let our customers know the cost of the playground as well as leasehold improvements, and make sure they are not opening up too big a place for an area that cannot support it, or too small a place in an area where they could do better.

We are looking to build units that require less maintenance, offer higher durability, and include new shapes and components. We are responding to the market demands.



The new Tilt-O-Sphere soft playground event by Little Tikes/Omni.

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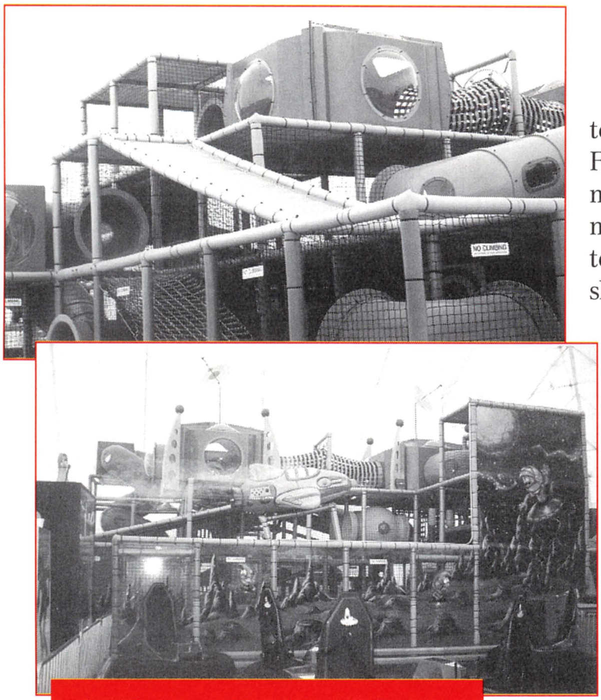


Top: The soft modular play area at Funtyme in New York before a Delta Play retrofit. Bottom: After the retrofit the newly themed unit has more eye appeal and activities.

LITTLE TIKES/OMNI

A conversation with Larry Reed of the LaPuente, Calif.-based company indicated a new phenomenon that's surfaced in the last six months: children shop playgrounds. Said Reed, director of family fun center sales:

Customers tell us children actually shop playgrounds, choosing fast food outlets by the play structures out in front.

These structures stay popular (in this setting and others) because parents are looking for a way to get their kids away from electronic games and into physical exercise in a fun kind of way. They look at the socializing skills and interaction.

The biggest problem we see is people not taking care of the existing structures they have. If they keep it looking fresh they would see a greater return of customers. Repair and maintenance are important, such as checking for foam missing from pipes or torn vinyl.

In addition to strict maintenance, if you have space you can add on to the structure. A lot of manufacturers don't want to put their products on existing structures because of liability issues. But you can fill in empty areas on the playground.

We've introduced a new type of system that will be shown at the Fun Expo in September that will make it easier to add on elements than it is today. The system reduces installation and shipping costs and allows operators to add events or move the structure. It uses very little foam and netting.

We find the 30-inch tubes to be the most flexible, and use our 47-inch tubes as dynamic components to create new play events. Among those new events are the Apollo 13 capsule, Deep Dive submarine, and Tilt-O-Sphere satellite.

DELTA PLAY LTD.

According to director of marketing Scott Forbes, even the most successful family entertainment centers realize that making upgrades to their tired old soft modular playgrounds can result in substantial increases in revenues and repeat customer business.

The Surrey, B.C. Canada company sees retrofitting units as one way to keep ahead of the competition:

Gigantic play systems over four years old are very dated and will not keep up with the new play events and themed play components now being offered.

The greatest changes in soft modular playgrounds are happening right now in our industry. Basic, low price play equipment suppliers eventually went out of business. The companies with new innovations not only offer unique play equipment but also include standard components that can be easily retrofitted.

Working with a company that is strong financially also goes hand-in-hand with the fact that they can also afford to spend time and money on new play events and concepts and themes, which will keep your play equipment years ahead of your competition.

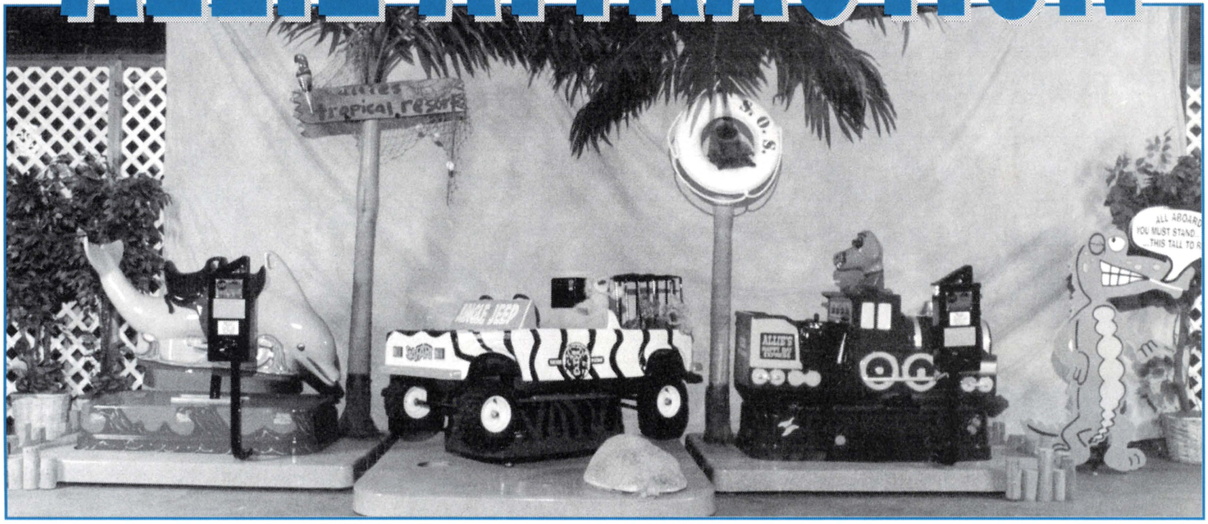
Check the financial stability of your chosen supplier; it will most assuredly make you feel prepared when it comes time to sign the contract and give a deposit. Companies with strong financial stability will, in some cases, let preferred customers use a letter of credit for the entire purchase. This way you are ensured your equipment is complete and loaded before the supplier gets any of your hard-earned money. ▲

> ***"All of those soft modular playgrounds in the field can be updated to recapture the imagination of the children who have been frequenting them."***

Soft play unit checklist

- ✓ **Safety**
- ✓ **Budget**
- ✓ **Space**
- ✓ **Design**
- ✓ **Maintenance**
- ✓ **Flexibility**
- ✓ **Durability**
- ✓ **Interactivity**
- ✓ **Quality components**
- ✓ **Liability insurance**
- ✓ **Manufacturer stability and cooperation**

Carousel goes tropical with new ALLIE ATTRACTION



When the beach is out of reach, parents can now look to their nearest shopping mall or discount store for an alternative mini-vacation for the kids: Allie's Tropical Resort, a fully themed entertainment attraction recently introduced by Carousel International.

Carousel's mainstay character Allie the Alligator is the central character of this entertainment oasis, an island which features three interactive kiddie rides aimed at children 10 and under. All the attractions cater to parents who seek out safe entertainment for their kids.

"Everything has to be grouped now," said Carousel's Steven Veatch. "It's a take off from larger theme parks and attractions. I think stand alone rides are a thing of the past even in front of K-Marts and other retail stores."

Allie's Tropical Resort provides fun recreation and lively children's music playing from speakers cleverly hidden in the coconut palm trees, and a fantastic wonderland of palm trees and tropical birds in the jungle environment keeps the young enthralled. Allie sings to the children as he guides them on the *Happy Day Express* train ride.

The next attraction is the *Safari Jungle Jeep*. Then it's through the sand to the water's edge to meet the popular dolphin, Willy, who will be sure to entertain all with its creative underwater bubbling voice.

Allie's Tropical Resort is a free standing kiddie play area that is aimed at high traffic food court areas in upscale malls and discount store chains. Dimensions are 17', 4-1/2" long x 6' wide.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Carousel International, P.O. Box 307, Eldon, MO 65026; (573)392-7122; fax (573)392-7125. ▲

Ageless carousels

ENTER NEW MARKET

Over a century ago it was a marvel of the Machine Age. Today its timeless beauty, craftsmanship, and trademark melodies grace amusement parks and boardwalks the world over bringing happiness to riders young in age and spirit. What's more nostalgic than a carousel?

Top photo: In Fredericksburg, Va., at the Spotsylvania Mall, wrought-iron fencing surrounds the Chance Americana Carrousel.

Bottom photo: At the Aurora Mall in Aurora, Colo., the custom carousel completes the circle of the shopping, dining, and entertainment experience.

ENTRANCE
TOKENS

FOLEY'S
MEN'S & HOME STORE

You don't have to journey to a big amusement park to experience the joy of riding a classic-style carousel. Over the last 10 years shopping malls have grown to be a major new location for carousels, and for good reason.

According to Rob Swinson, national sales manager for Chance Rides of Wichita, Kansas, it comes down to the drawing power of the carousel which helps bring the family out together. “The carousel impacts parental decisions on where to shop, encourages repeat business, and extends the length of their stay,” says Swinson. “It's a nice enhancement to an otherwise passive environment.”

> *“The carousel impacts parental decisions on where to shop, encourages repeat business, and extends the length of their stay.”*

Shopping malls that formerly used fountains and landscaping along the wide pathways in front of retail tenants are now putting in something that creates a pleasant visual setting and translates into added revenue for the mall.

“A carousel sets a mall apart from its competition,” advises Swinson, “and gives it a marketing tool for special promotions such as charity fund-raisers and cross-marketing opportunities with retailers and the food court. That's why we recommend carousels be placed in the center court or next to the food court.”

Swinson adds, “There's a saying that everybody loves a carousel. They are as popular today as ever, perhaps more. We've heard a lot of positive remarks from mall retailers because the carousel brings in greater traffic, is not obtrusive, and doesn't interfere with their business. It's a win-win situation for the mall, the retailers, the customers, and the carousel operator.”

THE CAROUSEL CHALLENGE

Jane Adkins, director of operations for The Brass Ring Carousel Co. LLC (a division of Take Ten Corp. in Charlotte, N.C.), has seven years experience with carousels in shopping malls. Take Ten has operated arcades and family entertainment centers in mostly southeastern mall locations for 23 years.

Adkins wasn't looking for a carousel or a unique challenge in 1990 but she got both when a mall landlord in Durham, N.C., approached the company about taking over its carousel and re-entering the mall with a game room. A mall expansion took the previous game room's space.

“We didn't know beans about carousel operations,” says Adkins with characteristic candor. “But we decided to learn, and took it on as a challenge. We wanted the game room and they wanted us to run the carousel as well.”

Adkins visited malls with carousels and basically looked at what was being done right and what was being done wrong. Her strong emphasis on proper management and marketing has contributed to the success of the company's carousel operations that now include four locations: the original site in Durhan, N.C.; Aurora, Colo.; Fredricksburg, Va.; and Ocoee, Fla., west of Orlando.

The Durham location features a 29-foot Bertazzon carousel with all horses; the other three are 28-foot Chance Americana models with a variety of animals that move plus one “stander” that is stationary and a chariot that is handicap accessible.

Adkins customizes each carousel. She believes in variety so everyone can have their favorite and children can ride each type of animal. Says Adkins, “We inherited the Bertazzon carousel but we chose Chance for the other malls because we could select different animals, which is a lot easier to market. Plus, the carousels are beautiful.”

Hands down, the favorite animal is

The Brass Ring Carousel Co.'s Bertazzon Venetian Carousel at the Northgate Mall in Durham, N.C.

VENETIAN CAROUSEL
UALIZER

the sea dragon on the three Chance carousels. Those models include 16 animals—an inner row of nine horses of different themes and colors plus menagerie animals such as a reindeer or bunny.

Adkins affectionately refers to carousel customers as "the stroller brigade" since most of the riders are children from two to nine or 11 years old. Girls stay interested longer; once boys turn nine it's no longer cool to ride the carousel.

There are a lot of frequent riders because of the way Adkins and her staff run the carousels. Promotions such as a two-for-one price for couples riding on Valentine's Day is an example of the creative marketing that keeps interest high in The Brass Ring Carousel Co. carousels.

"Your carousel is an extension of the mall's marketing," explains Adkins. "Bottom line, if you're in a mall, people have to come to the mall or you're dead. Malls like a carousel because it brings people there, it's an element of entertainment, and it's a reward for parents to give their children."

She cautions operators to balance the need of the mall to promote itself with the need of the operator to cover business expenditures: "You have to be smart enough and strong enough to not give away every ride free. You have to strike a happy medium, working with mall marketers using the carousel as a tool, but mindful that you are running a business."

SOUND ADVICE

Adkins offers the following recommendations on carousel operations:

First, put something together with the landlord. Don't find a location and then try to figure out how to make it work.

Second, do your homework and make sure the economics seem possible. Do traffic counts and know what you can expect in ridership—the same demographic homework for any business. Analyze the customer base (tourists, repeat customers) to see what you can get per ride.

Third, once you have the right location, choose the right personnel. Fourth, embark on a marketing plan and be a stickler for a strict maintenance schedule.

What type of person is best suited to carousel operations? According to Adkins, "Someone who enjoys working with children and has the patience to work with the parents. Also, someone with good management techniques and the know-how to draw out the best in workers and the public."

Adkins says the primary goal is the safety of the children as well as their enjoyment. Strict carousel maintenance is necessary to assure this safety and keep the ride appealing to the public.

On-site management is important to Adkins, who has seen many operations use local temporary agencies. "Spend the time to find qualified managers," she says. "You can't use the same arcade personnel because these are two separate businesses. They cater to separate groups and are marketed differently."

In addition, carousels can't be run the same as a kiddie ride kiosk. "You have to have personal contact," remarks Adkins. "Someone has to be

TOKENS
ENTRANCE
THE BRASS RING CAROUSEL COMPANY
RULES

Top photo:
Jane Adkins

Bottom photo:
Parents and children line up to ride the carousel in the Ocoee West Oaks Mall near Orlando.

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> *"The carousel is a long-term investment in equipment and a long-term relationship with the landlord and the community."*

sure the child has been put on the animal safely and removed safely. You can't put the carousel out there and think it will run itself."

Carousel operations are not for the feint of heart, considering the price of the equipment—figure roughly a quarter of a million dollars for the carousel itself.

Adkins reminds, "The carousel is a long-term investment. You have to make a commitment when you go into this business. In a game room or entertainment center, if you make a mistake buying a game that's not popular you can move it and maximize your potential elsewhere. With a carousel you can't pack it up and put it in your yard until you have another place for it."

Debt retirement doesn't come quickly due to the expense of operating carousels properly. Still, Adkins sees opportunities for those who are willing to do their homework, realize the expenses, and follow sound management and marketing plans.

"This also is a long-term relationship with the landlord and the community," says Adkins. "It has to be set up as a permanent operation (as in wrought-iron fencing) based on long-term contracts (as in 10 years). In the first year you build that market. Marketing starts paying off in the second, third, and fourth years. For the first year you are banking on that newness—people realizing that it's there. It's after everyone in town has ridden the carousel that you have to persevere."

And finally: "Be sure the mall is supportive of what the carousel can do for surrounding tenants. The mall should not just look at you as another tenant, because you are using your investment to market their mall. Be sure the mall wants you there, on both the local and corporate levels. You all have to be team players with the sole purpose of marketing that mall."

Chance Rides offers four different carousel models: 50-foot Grand Carrousel, 36-foot Classic Carrousel, 28-foot Americana Carrousel, and the 20-foot Fantasy Carrousel introduced in May 1996. Prices start at $150,000-$175,000. Each Chance model is its own work of art. All the animals are custom-painted, no two are alike. ▲

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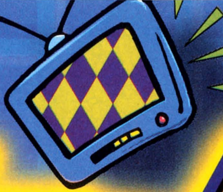

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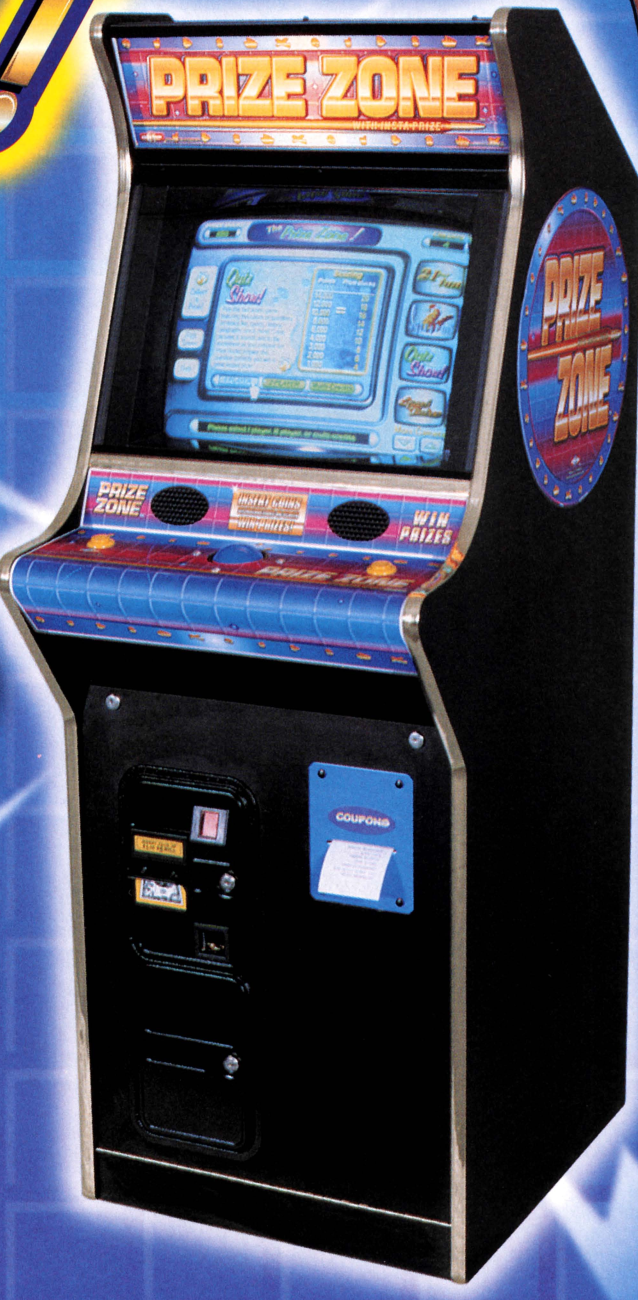
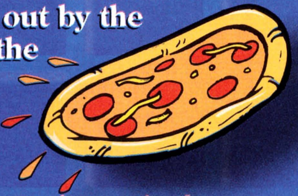
Prize Zone is the first multi-game prize machine for street locations. Players can play a variety of exciting skill games and acquire prize credits based upon how well they play. Prize credits are then exchanged for prizes programmed into the game. A coupon is printed out by the machine to be redeemed with the attendant.





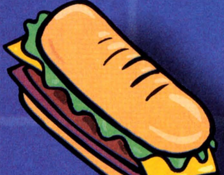
PRIZES: Up to 15 different prizes can be used. No merchandise counter is required. Most of the prizes can be the items that are already sold at the location, such as food and drinks. Payout %'s are completely adjustable.

GAMES: Prize Zone offers 7 exciting SKILL games. All games feature Progressive Jackpots and Insta-Prize.™ Insta-Prize is our patented feature that allows players to win large prizes on a single play. Prizes such as a TV or a pizza can be won, in one game, without exceeding desired payout.

CARD GAMES: Super Solitaire, 21 For Fun, Speed Poker and Super 11's.

TRIVIA GAMES: Quiz Show, a photo trivia game.

CLASSICS: Scud Attack and Squirms.



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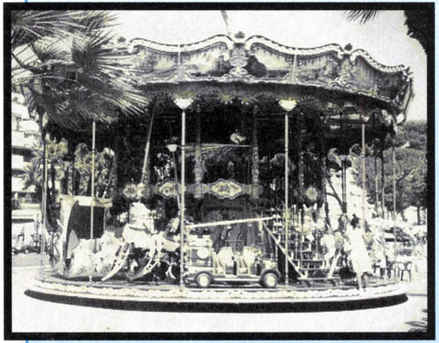
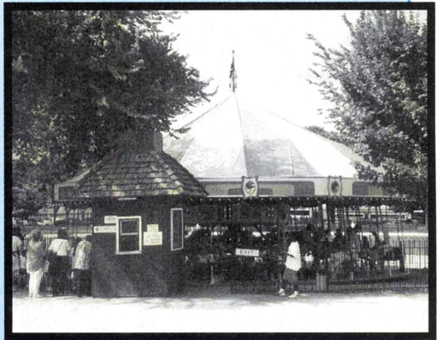
Carousels MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND

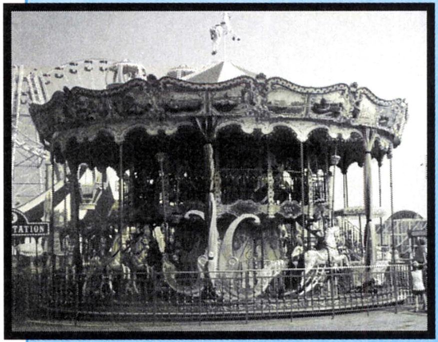
While the most common home for a carousel is an amusement park, carousels appear around the globe in a variety of settings.



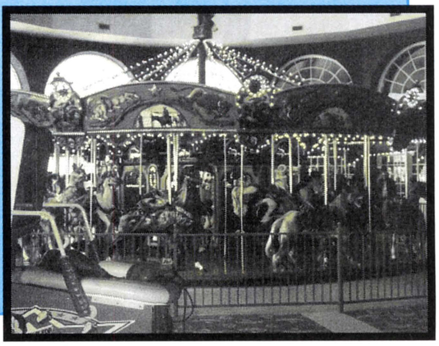
On the French Riviera you can find this carousel on the beachfront in Cannes, France.



Along The Mall in Washington, D.C., across from The Smithsonian, visitors line up for a ride.



This double-deck carousel is the focal point at Mariners Landing Pier on the boardwalk in Wildwood, N.J.



Patrons gravitate to this carousel in the Boomtown Family Fun Center at Boomtown Casino in Reno, Nev.

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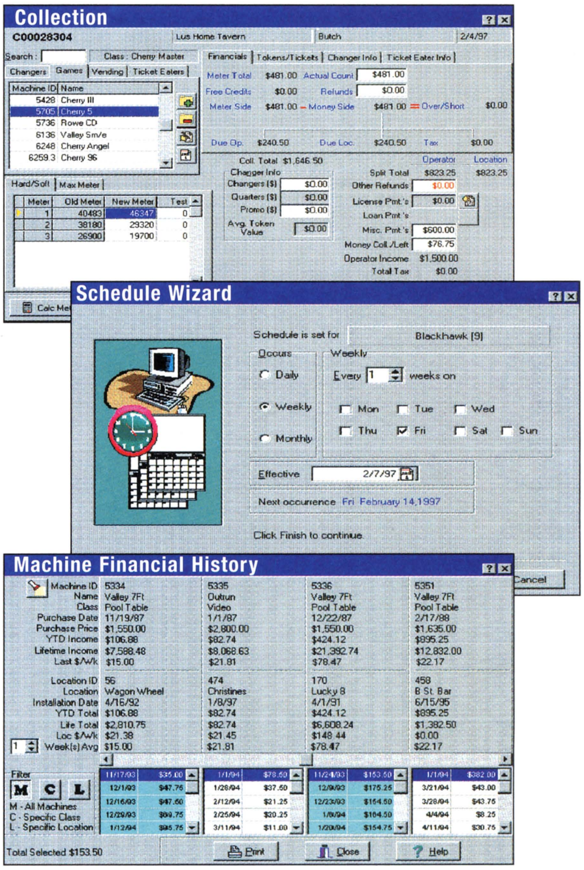

Collection

C00028304 | Lus Home Tavern | Butch | 2/4/97

Search: | Class : Cherry Master

Changers | Games | Vending | Ticket Eaters
Financials | Tokens/Tickets | Changer Info | Ticket Eater Info

Machine ID	Name
5428	Cherry III
5705	Cherry 5
5736	Rowe CD
6136	Valley Sm/e
6248	Cherry Angel
6259.3	Cherry 96

Meter	Old Meter	New Meter	Test
1	40483	46347	0
2	38180	29320	0
3	26900	19700	0

Meter Total $481.00 Actual Count $481.00
Free Credits $0.00 Refunds $0.00
Meter Side $481.00 – Money Side $481.00 = Over/Short $0.00
Due Op. $240.50 Due Loc. $240.50 Tax $0.00
Coll. Total $1,646.50

Changer Info
Changers ($) $0.00
Quarters ($) $0.00
Promo ($) $0.00
Avg. Token Value $0.00

	Operator	Location
Split Total	$823.25	$823.25

Other Refunds $0.00
License Pmt.'s $0.00
Loan Pmt.'s
Misc. Pmt.'s $600.00
Money Coll./Left $76.75
Operator Income $1,500.00
Total Tax $0.00

Schedule Wizard

Schedule is set for Blackhawk [9]

Occurs
○ Daily
● Weekly
○ Monthly

Weekly
Every 1 weeks on
☐ Mon ☐ Tue ☐ Wed
☐ Thu ☑ Fri ☐ Sat ☐ Sun

Effective 2/7/97

Next occurrence Fri February 14,1997

Click Finish to continue.

Machine Financial History

Machine ID	5334	5335	5336	5351
Name	Valley 7Ft	Outrun	Valley 7Ft	Valley 7Ft
Class	Pool Table	Video	Pool Table	Pool Table
Purchase Date	11/19/87	1/1/87	12/22/87	2/17/88
Purchase Price	$1,550.00	$2,800.00	$1,550.00	$1,635.00
YTD Income	$106.88	$82.74	$424.12	$895.25
Lifetime Income	$7,588.48	$8,068.63	$21,392.74	$12,832.00
Last $/Wk	$15.00	$21.81	$78.47	$22.17
Location ID	56	474	170	458
Location	Wagon Wheel	Christines	Lucky 8	8 St. Bar
Installation Date	4/16/92	1/8/97	4/1/91	6/15/95
YTD Total	$106.88	$82.74	$424.12	$895.25
Life Total	$2,810.75	$82.74	$6,608.24	$1,382.50
Loc $/Wk	$21.38	$21.45	$148.44	$0.00
1 Week(s) Avg	$15.00	$21.81	$78.47	$22.17

11/17/93	$35.00	1/1/94	$78.50	11/24/93	$153.50	1/1/94	$382.00
12/1/93	$47.75	1/28/94	$37.50	12/9/93	$175.25	3/21/94	$43.00
12/16/93	$47.50	2/12/94	$21.25	12/23/93	$164.50	3/28/94	$43.75
12/29/93	$89.75	2/25/94	$20.25	1/6/94	$104.50	4/4/94	$8.25
1/12/94	$85.75	3/11/94	$11.00	1/20/94	$154.75	4/11/94	$30.75

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C - Specific Class
L - Specific Location

Total Selected $153.50

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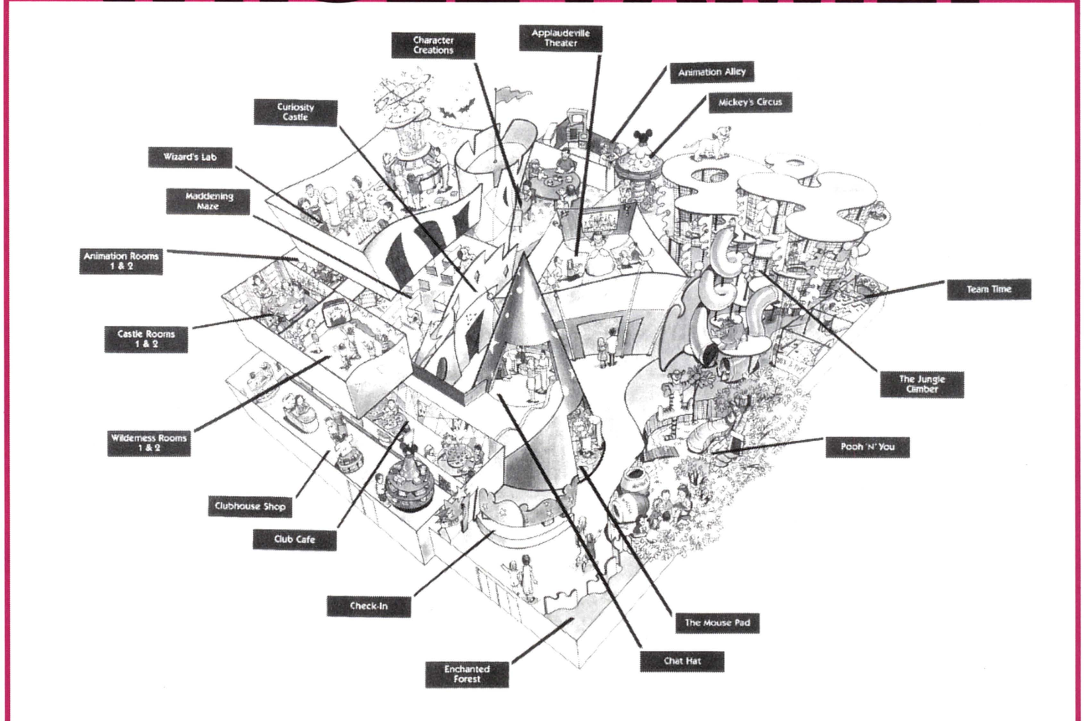
Character Creations
Applaudeville Theater
Animation Alley
Mickey's Circus
Curiosity Castle
Wizard's Lab
Maddening Maze
Animation Rooms 1 & 2
Castle Rooms 1 & 2
Wilderness Rooms 1 & 2
Clubhouse Shop
Club Cafe
Check-In
Enchanted Forest
Chat Hat
The Mouse Pad
Pooh 'N' You
The Jungle Climber
Team Time

Disney is touting the virtues of family bonding with its newest children's attraction, Club Disney, a 24,500-square-foot CEC in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

While children's entertainment centers have suffered a few economic black eyes in recent years, the industry is still viable within the larger context of family fun, according to a number of experts in the field.

When talking about children's entertainment there is no escaping the long shadow cast by the pioneers at the Children's Television Workshop and their brainchild, "Sesame Street." The touchstone they discovered was the importance of parents in creating entertainment for kids.

"Parents don't buy their kids computers to play Doom," noted Celia Pearce of the Momentum Media Group in Venice, Calif. "It's the same with out-of-home entertainment."

"I sense that CECs (children's entertainment centers) that focus strictly on kids have struggled greatly," added Harold Skripsky of the Enchanted Castle, a family fun center in Lombard, Ill. "I think the trend is away from a single use CEC. They need to be combined with other attraction elements and have a broader base."

What Pearce, Skripsky, and others see in the model developed by "Sesame Street" is twofold: parents want

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Harold Skripsky

their children's entertainment to be laced with educational value and, like "Sesame Street" with its double meanings and tongue-in-cheek attitude, they want to be entertained themselves.

"All CECs to date have failed miserably in involving parents in children's activities" or providing them with another alternative, said Jill Bensley of the JB Research Co. in Ojai, Calif., adding that even Starbucks coffee and a pastry would sweeten the experience for adults. "Nobody's done that. It's such a no-brainer. Who makes the decisions? The adult."

Even manufacturers of kids attractions are taking parental influence into account when designing new equipment. Steven Veatch of Carousel International, an Eldon, Mo.,-based kiddie ride manufacturer, said his company's new rides reflect such expectations. The company has even recently licensed Smokey the Bear for an upcoming ride.

"One of the things we have done with our *Friendly Dolphin* ride is to talk about the environment as it relates to water," he explained. "While it's a politically correct type of thing, that's where it's going. It's more than just entertainment; there has to be some meaning behind it."

Jason Wharrie, president of Prime Play Systems, which is a soft modular playground manufacturer in Surrey, B.C., Canada, sees this trend as a fusion with the larger family entertainment center industry.

"If you do your demographics properly you can still have a successful CEC," he said. "I think the terms CEC and FEC are blending. Most places have more than soft modular playgrounds. They add bumper cars or train rides or laser tag for older kids."

Beyond adding those traditional amusement elements, CEC operators are also drawing on elements from other segments of the entertainment business—such as the food and beverage industry—and structuring their facilities in ways that bring the family together for a group experience.

The key to a successful children's entertainment operation is involving parents in featured activities such as this laser tag attraction at a Planet 4 Kidz location.

Pearce says this consumer demand is part of a larger shift in community values placing more focus on the family unit. "That's why a science museum is such a good model for a family entertainment center," she said. "The whole idea of adding a family entertainment layer to any out-of-home activity has really become a trend in the '90s."

Celia Pearce and Jill Bensley

One way of doing this, according to Pearce, is developing content that all members of the family will enjoy. The popularity of Disney films is proof positive that such content is a formula for success. "One of the things that works for parents is to have aspects of the story address their own childhood," she added. "It gives them a chance to bond with their children and get a nostalgia-type feeling."

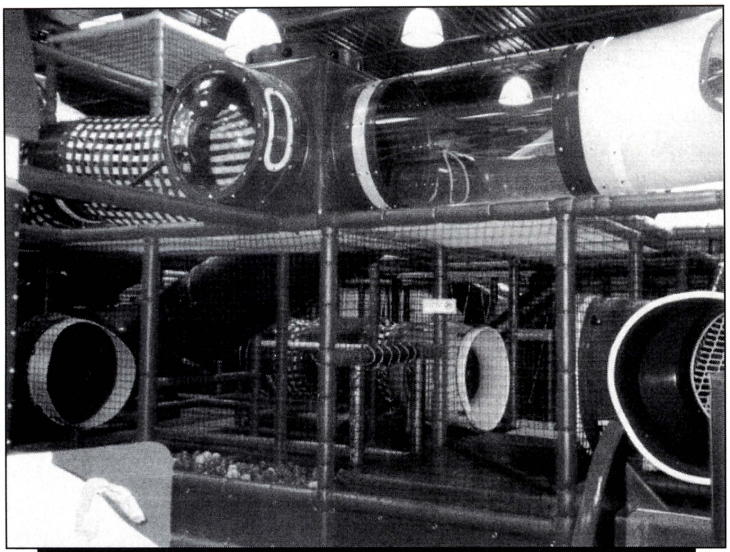
Disney itself is touting the virtues of family bonding with its newest children's attraction, Club Disney, a 24,500-square-foot CEC in Thousand Oaks, Calif., that offers more than a dozen diverse play environments themed to familiar Disney stories and characters.

"This is a brand new concept for The Walt Disney Co., and it combines our creativity with our desire to find new and rewarding ways for families to be entertained and spend time together," said Club Disney vice president and general manager Jay Rasulo at the time of the facility's opening earlier this year.

Marketing to kids

Broadening the appeal of attractions in a children's entertainment venue has the added benefit of eliminating some of the distinctions between young children and pre-teens thus garnering a larger cross section of the market

Denise Weston of SCS Interactive, a company in North Attleboro, Mass., which produces interactive self-powered entertainment attractions, says the key is designing experiences that appeal to what she calls "tweeners," kids between the ages of eight and 12. The firm's most recent installation is the Foam Factory in Marietta, Ga., where kids and adults play together in a Nerf-type world that doubles as a science lab for school groups during the day.



Staples such as this soft modular playground from Prime Play Systems at Adventure Land in Springfield, Md., are still popular with younger customers.

"If an attraction appeals to that age-group of tweeners you have appealed to the broadest range," she said. "They have to be cool but they are still wired to play like young children."

What appeals to this range, according to Weston, are games that the player can control and have a fair shot at mastering. "It makes the challenge more personal," she said.

While focused on a younger demographic, Carousel's Veatch agrees that interactivity is central to making a fun game or ride for today's children. "We're getting much more into interaction and more importantly skill," he said. "The kids are now able to cause something to happen in the game."

This idea of player autonomy also extends to traditional redemption operations, a mainstay of family fun, according to Skripsky, who argues that trading in tickets lets kids enter into an adult-type transaction and provides added entertainment.

"Kids are collectors and there's an inherent psychology to winning and collecting tickets," said Skripsky. "You can't assume kids are not important. They are far more discriminating than they were in the past. The value of items in your redemption center is vital. You've got to recognize that children are your core business and how you market to them will affect your economic future."

In pursuing his marketing goals, Skripsky said he sticks to the basics for younger customers with soft modular play, costumed characters, kiddie rides, and birthday parties. Even the food service at Enchanted Castle is developed with children in mind. "We try to design our food for kids and we keep it intentionally bland," he said. "It's very fresh and highly edible but it doesn't blow them away."

In fact, these basics undercut the culture of technology that is so pervasive in other entertainment arenas. Weston argues that while the look and feel of upscale, oversized arcades like Sega GameWorks may appeal to some consumer groups, its the social factors of play that are most important to families and their children.

"Technology has to be felt, not seen," Weston said. "Attraction mixes that include everybody are going to be the trend in the future. It has to be something you can't pop into your computer at home. Everybody's going to be able to play together in the same place. Even the adult will have something fun to do. Adults don't just want to watch their kids play. They want to join in with them."

Pearce agrees that technology has to be tailored correctly for children. She adds that today's kids are computer savvy and will expect high tech attractions as part of the entertainment mix, if not now, in the near future. "Technology still hasn't caught on for little kids," she said. "The place you've seen it so far is in science museums. The Exploratorium in the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco has really set the pace. The barrier of entry in CECs and FECs is going to be cost."

In fact, the barrier of cost dominates the backdrop of any discussion of children's entertainment, and this perception is what has ultimately driven operators to target their attractions at a wider range of customers, all the while trying to deliver quality entertainment for kids.

"One of the problems with kids' entertainment is people don't want to spend a lot of money," concluded Bensley. "If you've got a gate of more than $5, it's hard to sell it. The operating economics of children's centers are much lower. Somebody's got to take a chance to break out of that." ▲

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Party On!

Whether you are just starting out on the birthday party trail or you are an experienced old hand at hosting such events, suppliers have a few new tricks up their sleeves that could put a little spice into your traditional birthday bash.

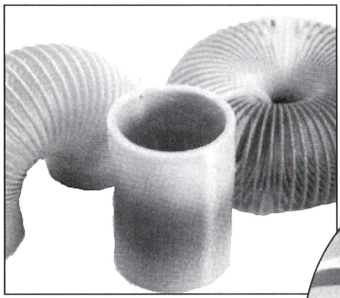
Rhode Island Novelty

Break from standard fare and make the birthday honorees feel like royalty by presenting them with a Gold Jewel Crown for boys or a Gold Jewel Tiara for girls, says industry veteran Bob Vittitoe of Rhode Island Novelty. This makes a nice keepsake, plus it can carry the logo of the location for an extra reminder of where the good times were spent.

Rhode Island Novelty stocks all the birthday supplies you could need, from party hats to candles. Vittitoe recommends the company's Loot Bag for children in the birthday group. The bag can be filled with a variety of prizes, including Rhode Island's popular 3.5-inch Floppy Flyer and 35mm Rainbow Coil Spring. (Locations select their own merchandise for the party bags.)

Vittitoe believes in "giving a little higher end merchandise that might spark the children's enthusiasm and encourage them to play games for prizes at the redemption counter. A good way is to show them nice prizes in the Loot Bag instead of low end prizes where they get quantity and not quality."

Vittitoe sees both sides of the coin. He is redemption sales manager with Rhode Island Novelty and was in distribution before. "It's hard to get across," he explains, "but the prizes are the key. The bells and whistles on the games are fine and dandy, but the prizes are what



Above: Rhode Island Novelty's Rainbow Coil Spring is suitable for both boys and girls.

FLOPPY FLYER

Right: The Floppy Flyer from Rhode Island Novelty makes a great Loot Bag item.

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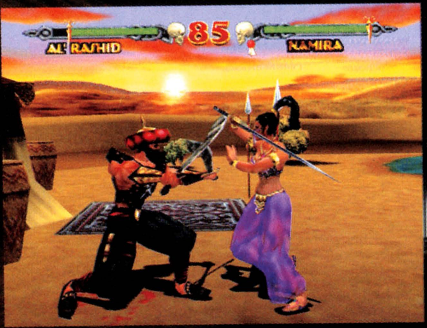
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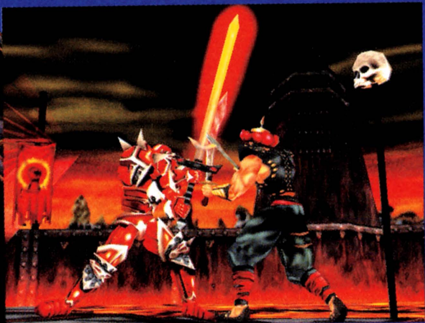

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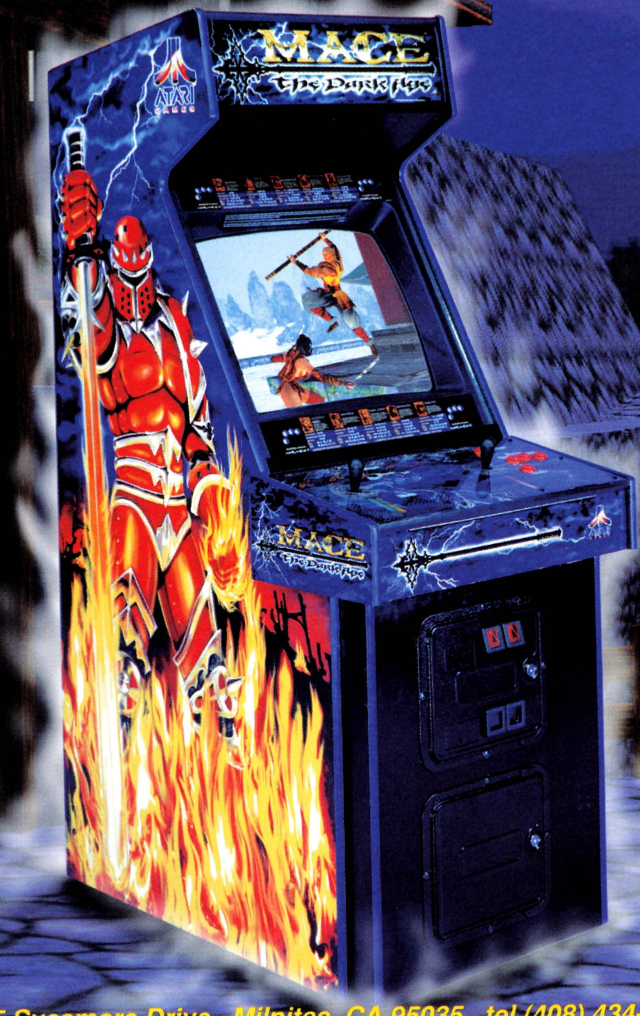
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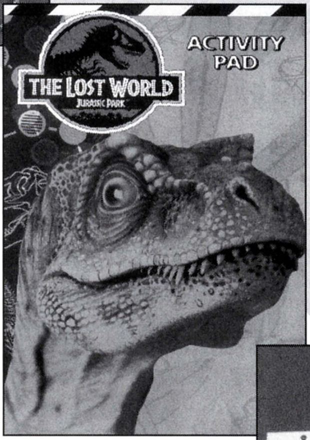
Left: Party kits from Oriental Trading come in four themes: dinosaurs, sports, space, and zoo.

Below: "The Lost World: Jurassic Park" Activity Pad is one of the items in the Oriental Trading dinosaur party kit.



Amusement centers are expanding their redemption game business to enhance their appeal to the birthday party decision-makers.

Happy Birthday

Left and below: Rebecca's features inexpensive themed place settings, party hats, and other birthday supplies.

keeps the players coming back."

When it comes to buying merchandise, Vittitoe advises comparing prices and, when possible, buying by the case. "Items are not that expensive," he says. "There's no reason to have a bad redemption counter because quality merchandise is there."

Success Plush

Brent Collins of Success Plush has a unique item that can be placed atop the birthday cake, put at each party setting, or included in a bag of prizes or treats: miniature Loony Tunes trophies featuring favorite characters such as Sylvester and Bugs Bunny. These trophies stand three or four inches tall.

Other items sure to please are 12-ounce cups with a lid and straw that come imprinted with Loony Tunes characters or other figures. These can be customized as well. In addition, Collins suggests twisty straws with animal or sports shapes to add interest at place settings, and a variety of economical plush for giveaways.

Oriental Trading

The company that calls itself "the world's largest toy box" has just the items to make young party celebrants happy: dinosaurs, and lots of them. From finger puppets and bean bags to pencil tops and notepads, Oriental Trading is brimming with dinosaurs.

The company features a new Dinosaur Party Bag already assembled with a licensed "Lost World: Jurassic Park" Fun & Activity Pad, plus dino crayons, spinning top, miniature figures, sticker, and pocket clip.

Birthday party kits are a specialty at Oriental. Choose from four themes: space, sports, zoo, and dinosaur. Each one has settings for groups of 12 that include paper blowouts, party hats, party favor bags, placemats, mugs, squirts, and rope bracelets.

Sondra Doyle of Oriental adds that Happy Sacks are also available. These are kits that include colorful bags, an assortment of toys and novelties, and ribbon to top off the sack. A typical finished sack can have an activity pad (themed to Scooby-Doo or another well-known character), small puzzle, ring, miniature harmonica, animal finger puppet, and sticker. Balloons, hats, and tableware are not part of the kit but can be ordered separately.

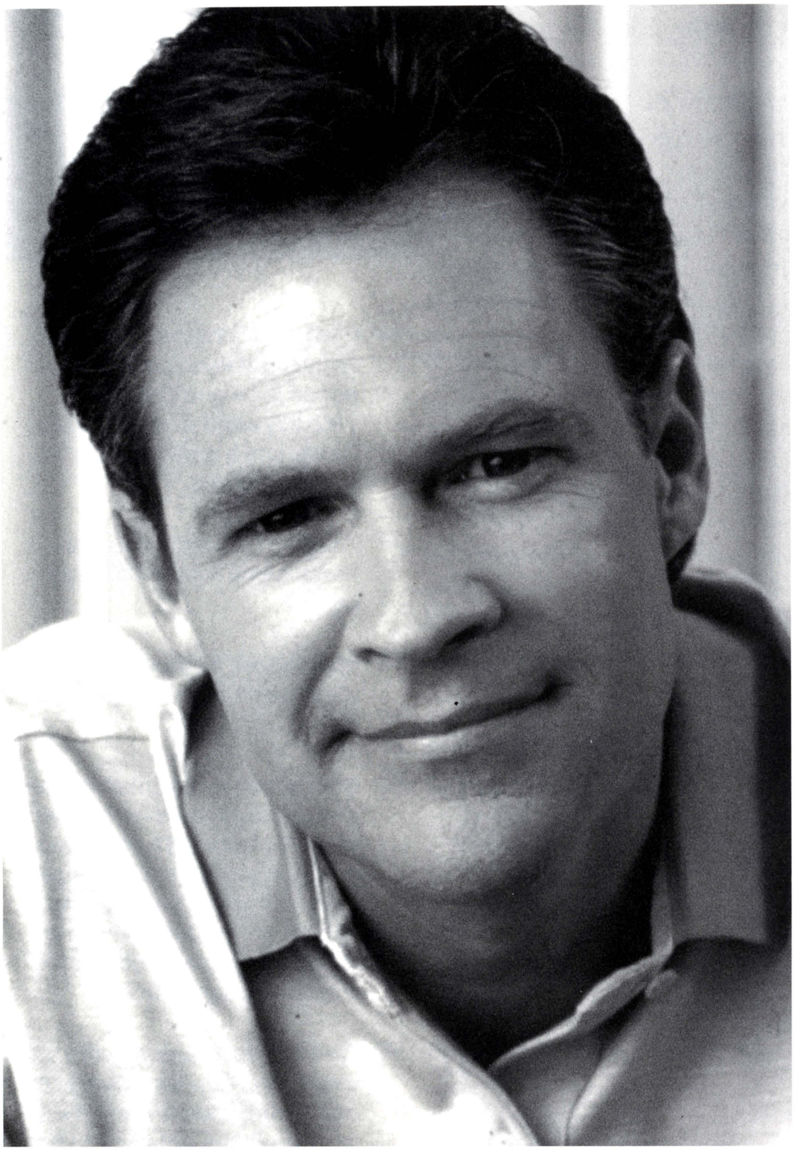
If the birthday party location has candy and toy cranes, Oriental offers a way to theme them with the addition of its Dinosaur Crane Topper kit that has 1,200 dinosaur-themed pieces.

Rebecca's

According to Joe Nazzaro of Rebecca's, the company "developed its birthday party line not by choice but by demand" while serving a variety of amusement venues over the past decade.

The wholesaler of novelty merchandise saw a niche with birthday-themed items and produced and promoted such products as the first "Color-me T" shirts that use a special set of non-toxic crayons to color in an image of the operator's choice. When ironed the colors become permanent.

Rebecca's established in-house screen printing operations for its T-



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The International Family Entertainment Center Show

shirts and also developed and copyrighted designs for some of the most inexpensive and popular birthday Party Packs that include themed napkins, placemats, cups, plates, and plastic utensils. Rebecca's also has themed invitations, party hats, balloons, and buttons. Party Packs are available in large quantities: 500 or 1,000 place settings.

Navarro recognizes the importance of redemption games to the age group of six through 15, which also happens to be the most active birthday party market. Says Navarro, "A facility featuring birthday parties as part of their market segment is now making a serious mistake omitting redemption-oriented games from the party experience for this age group. The decision to hold a birthday party at a given facility is now influenced by the additional availability of a redemption center.

"Skating, bowling, miniature golf, and other amusement centers are rapidly developing and expanding the secondary features of redemption games to enhance their appeal to the birthday party decision-makers."

Navarro categorizes birthday parties as good, better, and best, with the best including discounted tokens, soft drinks, themed place settings, cake, balloons, pizza or hot dog, photo, T-shirt and/or party bag.

He sees no sign of birthday parties letting up: "Fortified as it currently is, by redemption and video centers, we are enjoying the best traffic in the party markets we have ever known."

Anthony Geraci of Rebecca's concurs: "In the past few years the party business has been growing at a very fast rate, helping many amusement centers increase business throughout the year." ▲

For more details on the items featured in this article, contact the following suppliers: Rhode Island Novelty, (800)435-3456; Success Plush, (800)396-8888; Oriental Trading (800)228-8884; and Rebecca's (800)777-2235.

BIRTHDAY PARTY SUGGESTION BOX

- **Costumed character mascot appears at each party and poses for a photo with the birthday child or party group. Designate a staff member to take a Polaroid.**
- **T-shirt or hat with the location's name for the birthday child.**
- **Specialized birthday cake with location name and/or character.**
- **Goody bag with trinket items and discount coupon for every child. Example: $1 off coupon good on any activity (bumper cars, miniature golf, batting cages) or for four free game tokens during a return visit. Use your imagination.**
- **Free coffee for adults with the birthday group and plenty of comfortable seating for them in a quiet area adjacent to the activities.**
- **Set up several birthday party packages that include different activities and food.**
- **Set aside one big room that can be used for multiple small parties or larger gatherings (sports teams, clubs), or go the separate room route with either kid-pleasing decor or solid colors that offer more flexibility.**
- **Market yourself: invite preschools and elementary schools to visit on a field trip; advertise through local newspapers and radio stations; sponsor a contest; get some good local press by performing a community service; and host corporate events.**

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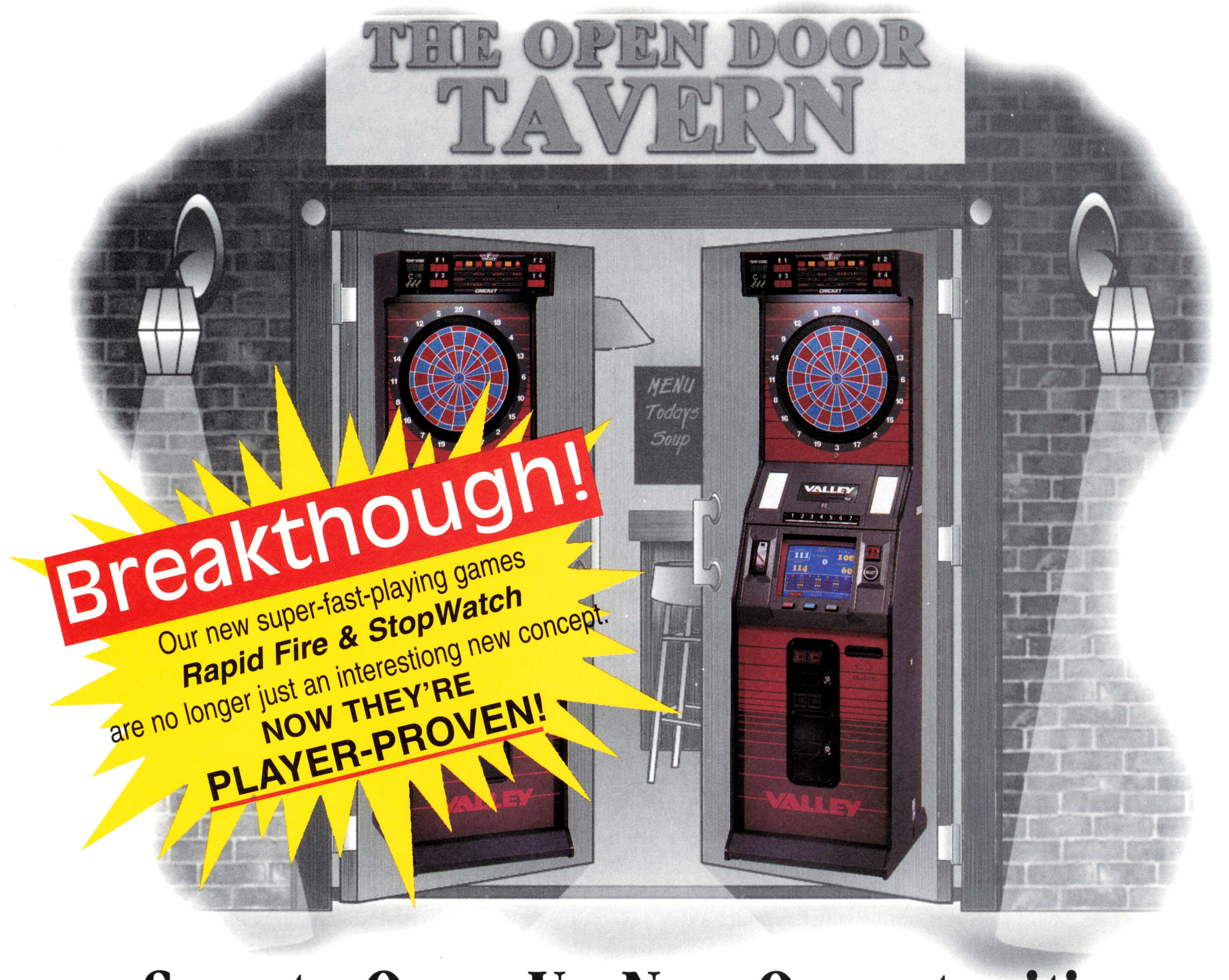

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Child care specialist DEVELOPS THE PLANET 4 KIDZ

While location based entertainment captures headlines as the trend of the day, a Mississippi child care professional has quietly developed a concept to fill a growing need: destination child care services.

Judy Hall of Jackson, Miss., entered the child care field in 1981, gradually building her business into four free-standing facilities. She could see the way society was changing, with traditional support caregivers such as grandparents not always available to help shoulder child care responsibilities, and decided to adapt her child care services.

"We saw that there was always a need for a destination type babysitter," said Hall, who is in business with her husband Danny. "We felt that our approach was novel in concept in that child care was not usually 24 hours a day seven days a week."

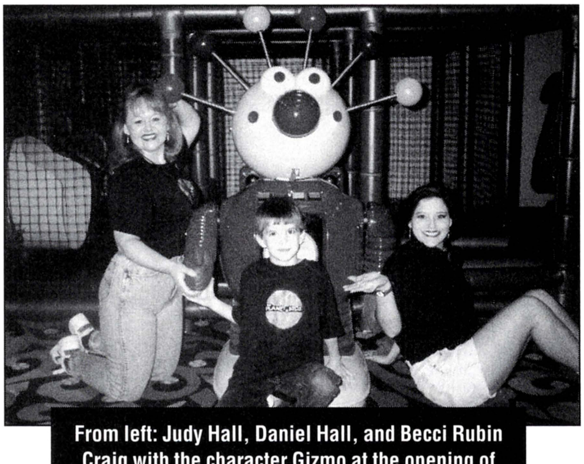
When dockside gaming came to Mississippi in 1993 the Halls contacted Harrah's Casino about on-site child care. The first small children's center opened at Harrah's Vicksburg location Nov. 15, 1993 with space for 13 children. Three expansions and three-and-a-half years later the center handles 75 children in a 3,000-square-foot area.

Next came a 15,000-square-foot children's center at Harrah's Mardi Gras Casino in Tunica, Miss., in April 1996, followed by a 10,000-square-foot center at the Harrah's Casino in St. Louis, Mo., this March. The latest project, scheduled for the fall with Harrah's Casino in Cherokee, N.C., on Indian land, will allow 7,000 square feet for The Planet 4 Kidz.

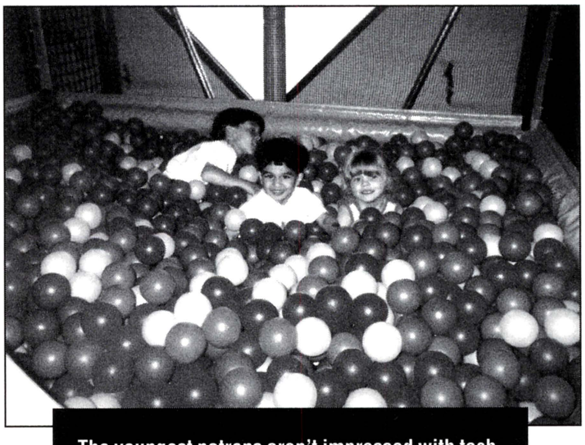
What started as short duration child care services adjacent to properties frequented by adults evolved into children's entertainment centers as the Halls added games and a wide range of activities.

"We involve entertainment in the mix at all levels," says Judy. "We have custom-made video walls (by MARS Enterprise) with a karaoke stage. At the Tunica location we occupy two floors that feature two three-story soft modular playgrounds (by Omni) with a space train riding underneath."

Usually the Halls come into an already measured space and devise a floor plan conducive to each property. At the St. Louis facility they could design and build from the ground up. That location fea-



From left: Judy Hall, Daniel Hall, and Becci Rubin Craig with the character Gizmo at the opening of Harrah's Mardi Gras Casino in Tunica, Miss.



The youngest patrons aren't impressed with technology. They like the simple fun of a sea of balls.

Children check in and receive a wristband.

A teenager enjoys a snowy adventure on Namco's *Alpine Racer*.

tures Laser Storm's laser tag and two levels of arcade games for both juniors and teens.

They also added Perky's Pizza with a counter that accommodates younger children on one side and the over-12 crowd and parents on the other. "Perky's is a simplified version of the pizza concept," says Judy. "It's easy to implement and the product can be varied greatly. The same pizza oven can produce pizza, cookies, and other products. It's very kid-friendly and operator-friendly."

The nearly 90 coin-op video and redemption games in the arcade are provided by Amusement Enterprises, the operating arm of Fun Enterprises. That company's Bill Cook says, "It's a great concept. There's a synergy between child care and the casino and the family entertainment center that can't be duplicated."

What kind of numbers has The Planet 4 Kidz experienced? According to Judy, "In the summer months between Vicksburg and Tunica we see about 100,000 children. Children from six weeks old to age 20 can come into our centers. Anyone who cannot participate in gaming has something to do in our facility.

"Our mission is to be there as a security measure. Children will be safe, watched, and entertained, and parents don't have to worry about them."

The Halls use a Sensormatic system where both parents and children wear non-removable wristbands. They also use the Tot Tracker by Innovative Computer Systems and Fun Center Software programs. Rates are generally from $3 to $3.50 per hour for children up to age 12 and $5 per hour for infants.

"At this time we see our market as providing a destination location child care service," comments Judy, who reports good rapport with Harrah's and a solid customer base. "People who like to frequent casinos are regulars," she remarks. Children average an hour to an hour-and-a-half stay. The Planet 4 Kidz is located at a shore site and not in the casino proper.

Back in 1993 the idea of a family entertainment center-type approach was an interesting idea. "A lot of corporations don't want to implement one on their own," says Judy. "In this market there are not many people who offer the type of service that we do. It was great timing. We had a company that could listen. We're growing with Harrah's; it's been a great relationship."

The couple sold their original four child care centers to concentrate on the destination market. "This is a family owned business and we are growing slowly on purpose," says Judy. "We intend to expand and diversify." One area involves joint ventures with movie theaters where The Planet 4 Kidz can provide children's entertainment and chaperone children into their movies while parents attend the movie of their choice.

The Planet 4 Kidz concept can apply to any situation where parents need short-term child care made convenient by its proximity to their destination, whether it be a cinema, casino, shopping mall, or museum.

While Judy and Danny created and guided The Planet 4 Kidz concept, they are quick to credit a loyal staff of key employees who have contributed to the success of their endeavor: general managers Kathy Keith in St. Louis, Eric Lawson and Patrick Raines in Tunica, and Katrina Moore in Vicksburg. Raines will move to the Cherokee property when it opens. ▲

What it's all about—Katrina Moore with safe, happy children entertained in a caring environment.

Bamboola blazes new trails in edutainment

What is the next trend in children's entertainment? For the answer, just ask Joe Shank, whose brainchild Bamboola, a new $3 million edutainment center, opened its doors in San Jose, Calif., last month on the same day that schools closed their doors for summer vacation.

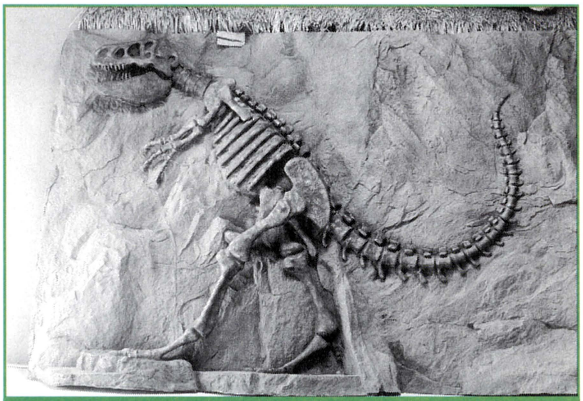
"We think we are really on the cutting edge of edutainment where kids learn through play," Shank told Play Meter. "There are things you've never seen in a typical entertainment center."

Bamboola is an outgrowth of Shank's and his partner Jim Theiring's experience with their first creation, the Almaden Valley Athletic Club (AVAC) a family-oriented fitness facility that has been in business for more than 20 years. AVAC has the largest swim and junior development tennis programs in California, a membership of more than 5,000, and the annual venue for the prestigious USTA Girls' 18 National Tennis Championships.

Shank found the location for Bamboola right across the street from AVAC in a former supermarket building, which he envisioned as the perfect site for an indoor/outdoor interactive oasis for kids and their parents. The facility was designed by Randy White of the White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group, which is recognized as one of the foremost international consultants on family learning and leisure facilities.

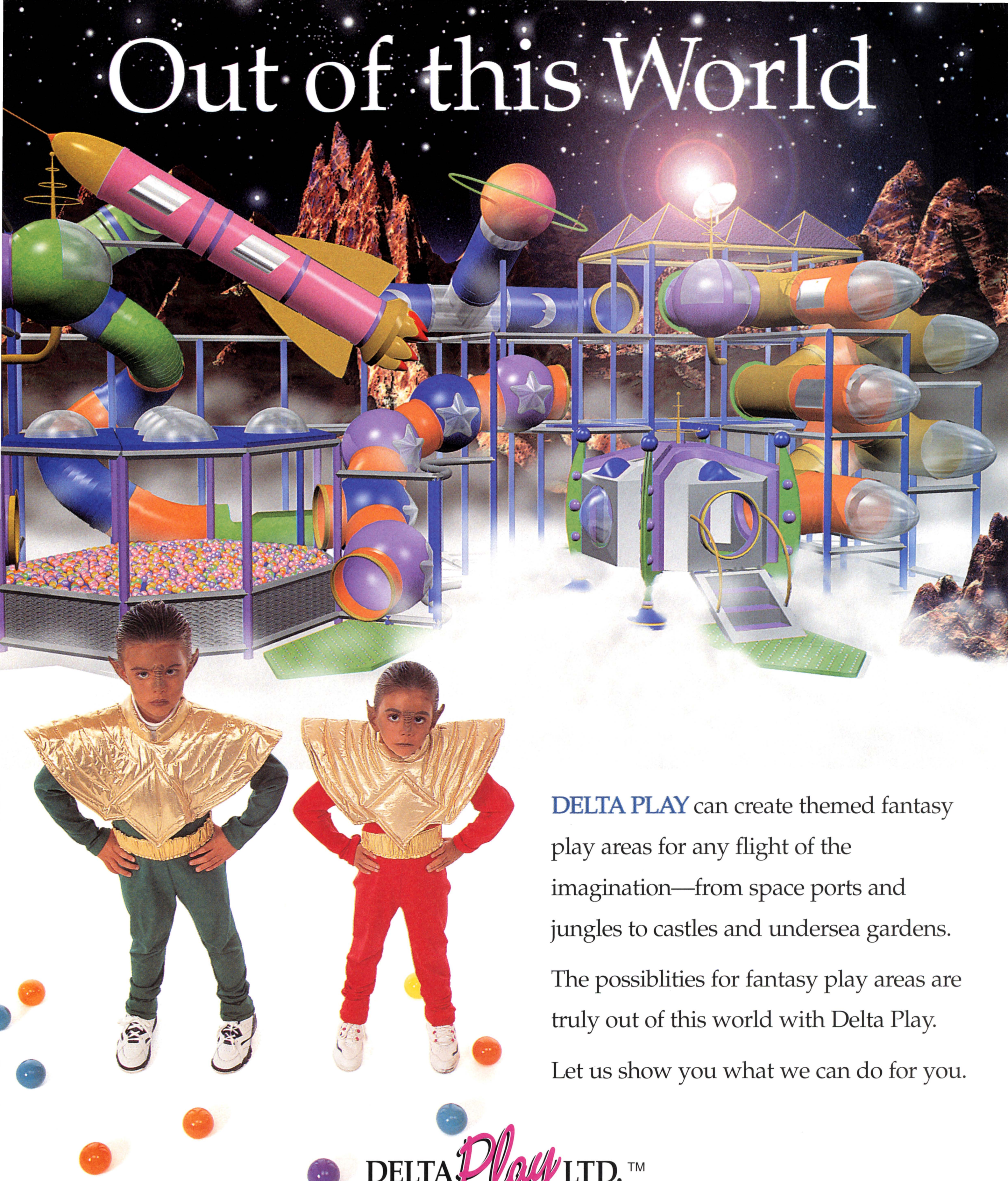
According to Shank, the philosophy behind Bamboola is to provide children with unstructured learning through play. "We've incorporated educational play elements from many of America's finest children's discovery museums, but unlike the museums, Bamboola kids can climb, play, shout, and have real fun," he explained. "All of the elements are hands-on play activities. They are tried and tested. Children have been doing these things for years on their own."

As part of a commitment to the local community, Bamboola will also offer adopt-a-school programs, community contributions, educationally-based field trips, top quality staffing, a complete wrist-band security system, and two essential rules: no child may enter without an adult chaperone and no adult may enter without a child.



Children can unearth dinosaur fossils and follow their tracks in the jungle garden at Bamboola.

Out of this World



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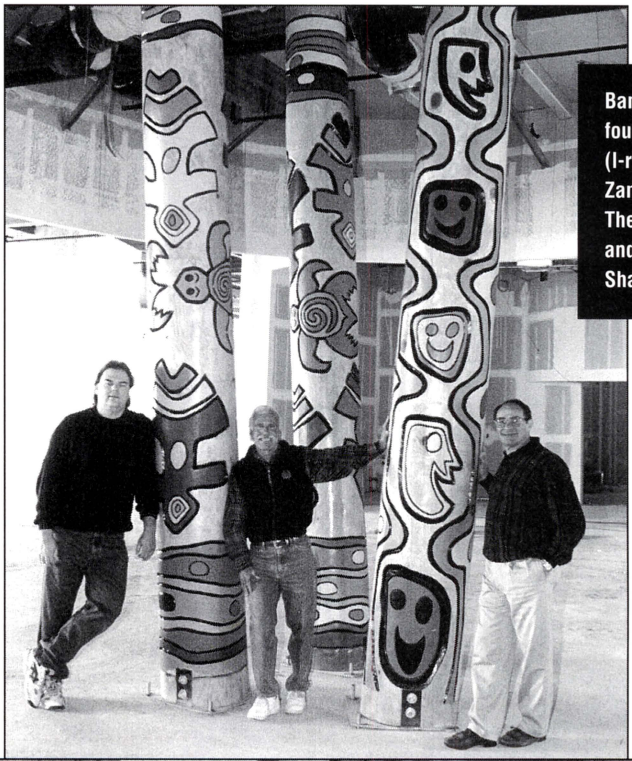
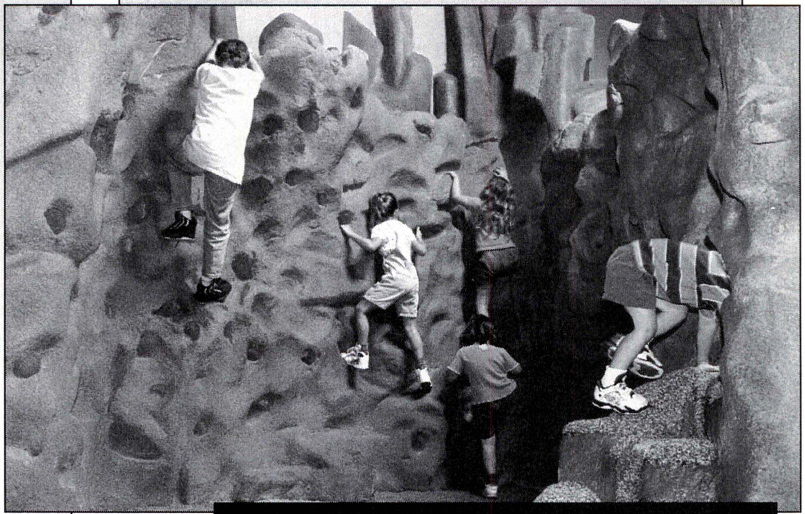
Bamboola will also offer a variety of birthday party packages, a live performances stage, roaming costumed characters who tell the magical story of Bamboola, and island decor that complements the story. In addition, afterschool programs; summer camp programs; and interactive cooking, arts, and crafts classes will be available.

"In a broad sense, I think the cohesiveness of families has fallen apart," concluded Shank. "We need a quality recreational facility where moms, dads, and kids can go together and learn to play as a unit. So I believe we are filling a tremendous need, providing a facility that people will enjoy many times because they'll get an experience they won't get anywhere else." ▲



Bamboola founders, (l-r): Mike Zamba, Jim Theiring, and Joe Shank.



Made by Arete Climbing Systems, the Bamboola Climbing Rock is made of composite fiberglass and towers up to eight and a half feet tall.

Bamboola at a glance

Play Elements

- 24' high three-level soft modular playground
- Interactive and educational maze
- Five arts and crafts studios
- Woodworking, drawing, painting, sand art, jewelry making, etc.
- Pretend village with supermarket, drive-in restaurant, playhouse, garage, and stage areas
- Construction area with blocks, giant Leggos, tinker toys, etc.
- Interactive water play tables and bubble making
- Grandmother's attic with pretend dress-up/costume area
- Puppet area with presentation stage
- Face painting
- Interactive cooking
- Tree house
- Token-operated kiddie rides
- Skill games and prizes
- Reading nook
- Live performance area for storytellers, puppet shows, clowns, jugglers, etc.
- Turtle Lagoon, a toddler's play area with soft structures and games

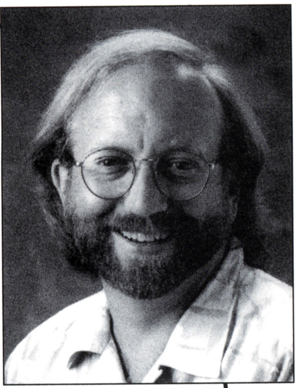
Outdoor Jungle Garden

- Dinosaur dig with fossils and treasures
- Children's sand play area
- Tropical plants and flowers

Additional Elements

- Indoor parents seating/viewing area
- Arts and crafts and interactive cooking lessons
- Restaurant serving food to guests only, including gourmet pizza and Starbucks coffee
- Six birthday party rooms

Look before you leap...



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Lee Wesson

Lee Wesson

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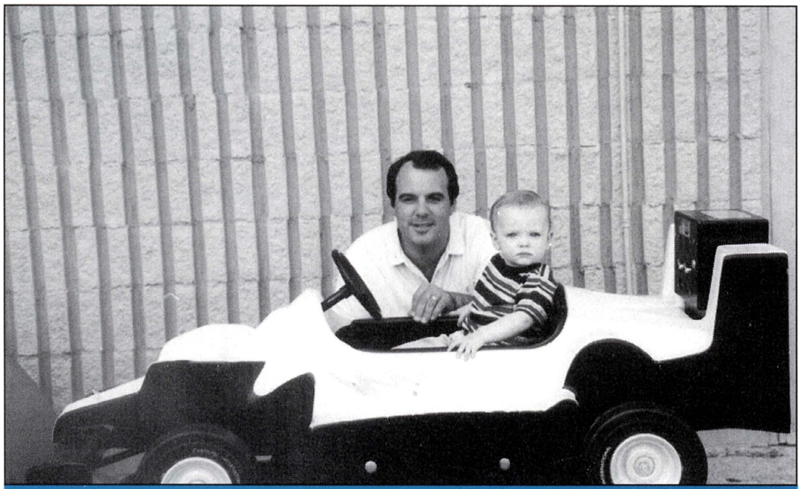
Kiddie ride operators look forward to the next century



Bill Chiles is mighty proud of his 15-month old son Brendon, who will certainly be able to give the old man some first-hand advice on kiddie rides!

Bill Chiles
vice president
National Kiddie Ride Association

In its 35 years, the National Kiddie Ride Association (NKRA) has seen many changes in the kiddie ride industry, some good and some bad. However, kiddie rides continue to earn good, steady money and the kiddie ride industry continues to grow every year. Kiddie rides are usually the first experience with coin-operated equipment for a child.

A short 20 to 30 years ago, kiddie ride operators had only a small selection of rides to choose from. There were just a few manufacturers making horses, cars, spaceships, and helicopters. Now there are dozens of manufacturers making hundreds of different styles of rides. The selection doesn't stop with different styles anymore. Rides can be ordered from motion only to fully interactive and from generic to licensed themes. The options are almost limitless.

The kiddie ride industry has become far more sophisticated than ever before and operators must use the latest technology to prosper in today's tough market. Kiddie ride operators are utilizing computers and route management programs to make sure operations run smoothly. They know that kiddie rides must be rotated, repainted, and refurbished on a regular basis. Operators must track collections and when sales drop they know it's time to rotate their rides.

The key to any successful kiddie ride company is to be easily accessible and offer great service. Kiddie ride operators have to work a lot harder than most operators because they have to appeal to the parents and the store managers in addition to the young children who will be riding the rides.

Kiddie rides are a profitable segment of a coin-op business. But operating the rides requires more attention than perhaps other types of equipment to make it work. Locations are demanding newer rides. They want higher commissions. Some kiddie ride operators are now using minimums to insure that they will make a profit while catering to their locations' demands. They must be astute in figuring the cost of the rides, insurance, labor, and other expenses to make an accurate minimum dollar amount that both parties are happy with.

And with new potential locations, a proper evaluation is vital to determine whether the location warrants a new ride or a refurbished one. There is a kiddie ride for every location but it may take a little work to determine which one will go where.

I have a few words to say to any operator thinking of trying kiddie rides: get advice from reputable kiddie ride operators before buying the kiddie rides you think you'll need. A good kiddie ride manufacturer or distributor won't give you unrealistic sales projections or tell you that all you do is place the ride and collect the money. It's not that easy.

Don't be afraid to ask questions like which type of rides earn best at your target locations. Don't buy all the same style of kiddie rides unless your location is requesting a certain type of ride. Giving your route a good mix is essential to running a profitable kiddie ride business. Most importantly, do not operate kiddie rides without liability insurance. The exposure on kiddie rides is much higher because you are targeting a much younger clientele.

The coin-op industry is going through many changes heading into the 21st century but kiddie rides should remain a vital force. The kiddie ride operators' philosophy, "Offer a good product, good service, and keep looking for potential clients," can apply to any business to make it successful as we head for a new century. ▲

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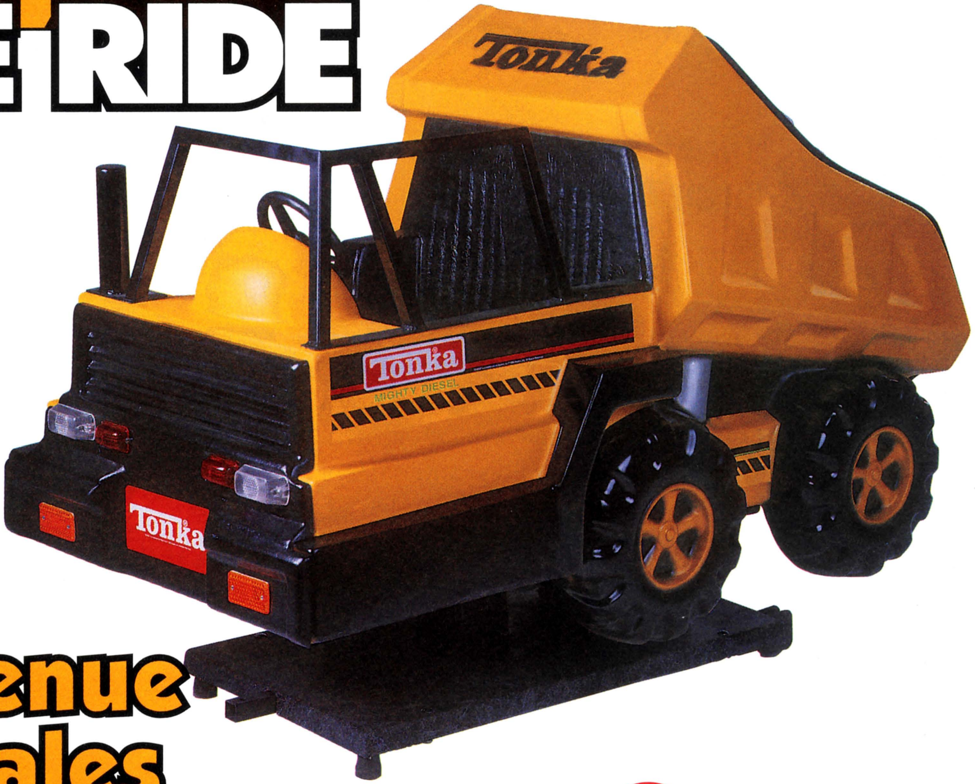
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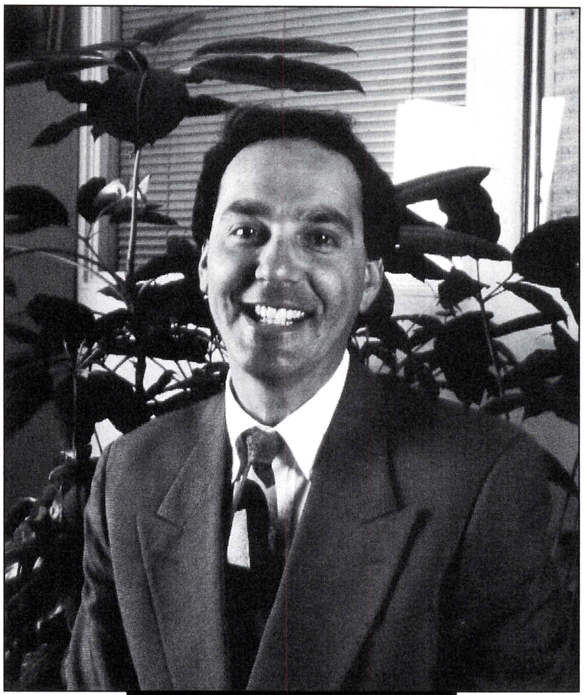


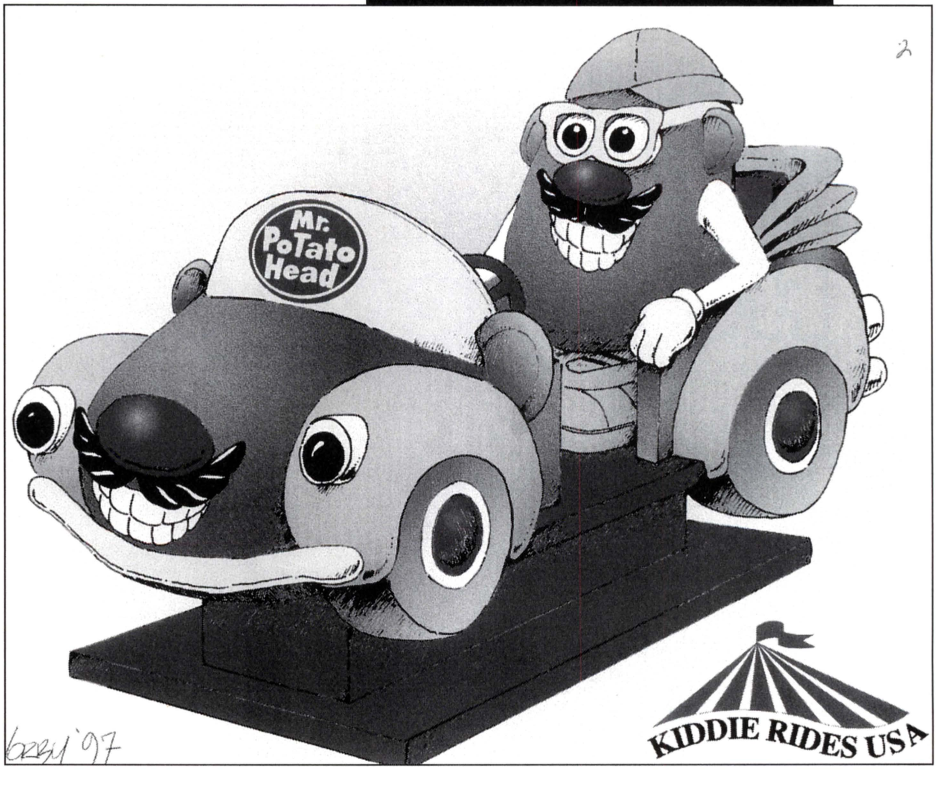
Brian Carasik

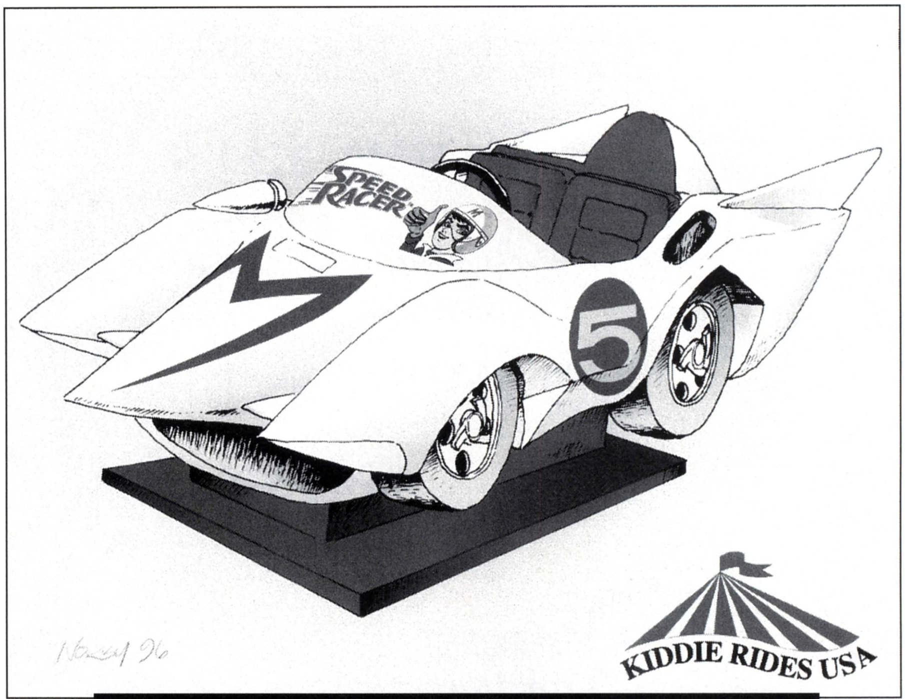
The first kiddie ride as we know it appeared sometime in the 1930s. There was little change until the 1970s when the European influence was introduced by the Versman brothers when they imported state-of-the-art product. It was about the time Nolan Bushnell, the father of video games, gave birth to the family entertainment restaurant industry with Pizza Time Theatre, a concept still flourishing with its successor, Showbiz Pizza restaurants.

With the advent of the family entertainment industry, the need for new and better designs in kiddie rides became apparent. You could no longer use a car or horse to satisfy the needs of your clientele. Thus the rebirth of the kiddie ride business. Helicopters, trains, planes, rocket ships, whatever you could imagine was available to the market.

When family restaurants became more abundant, kiddie ride companies from all over the world looked for a new market share in other segments of the marketplace like super-

In September Mr. Potato Head, in both a *Spud-Mobile* and a *Tator-Totor*, will coincide with the "Toy Story II" movie. Mr. Potato Head is the leading man in this computerized animated cartoon classic.





Speed Racer Mach 5 Race Car **is based on the 30-year-old cartoon series.**

markets, discount stores, general merchandise stores, etc. The European manufacturers looked at the United States as a massive marketplace with virtually no kiddie rides. The market appeared open for the taking. However, to the European's dismay, they found that the attitude toward kiddie rides in the United States was very different than the acceptance in Europe. That began to change with the introduction of the interactive ride in the late 1970s.

In the 1990s, the English introduced licensed rides with the *Postman Pat* ride. It became very popular and created a new problem for operators, who realized they could no longer leave a ride on location for years because the locations began to see that new product would increase profits. After operators saw the difference, the kiddie ride route became one that required rotation. Operators were concerned with return on investment and smart ones who integrated new products into their line saw a large increase in their bottom line.

Licensed kiddie ride product came to the United States in 1993. There are still those who have resisted the new licensed products, calling them a flash in the pan. However, these operators probably will not be around in a few years. They will be replaced by operators who adapt to the changes. The fact is that a new kiddie ride with a long lasting licensed theme will out-earn that generic car or truck by a great margin. Locations are attuned to that fact and will demand better product.

The baby boomers have had a lot to do with the volume of rides on location as well as the type of rides that are being used. Non-violent themes are well accepted. Product that is recognizable from their childhood like the Tonka Truck, rides that educate, and of course, the horse, train, and merry-go-round are still favorites. Operators must have a variety.

The future of kiddie rides is bright. There is a lot of old product that will be phased out over the next 10 years. This presents challenges for the existing operators and opportunities for new operators.

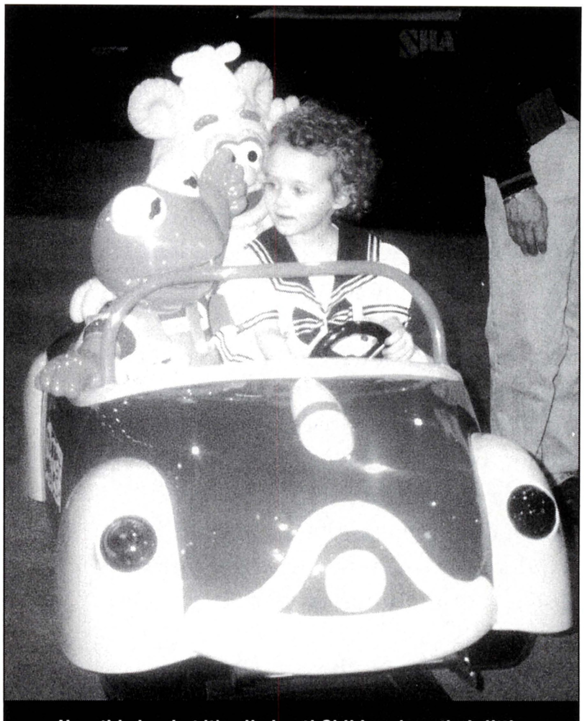
At Kiddie Rides USA we're committed to supplying the market with what it demands, and right now we see a strong demand for the new licensed generation of kiddie rides. New styles come with new design criteria like rounded edges, lower profiles, entrances, and ergonomic seating areas. Our demographic profile for a new ride selection has a strict criteria. While our main focus is the two- to nine-year-old, we try to select a ride that parents can identify with so they get a form of emotional entertainment and involvement with the ride itself as they watch their children have fun.

Our *Tonka Mighty Dump Truck* and *Tonka Bulldozer*, themed after the originals that are celebrating their 50th anniversary, are good examples. The thought behind the emotional interactivity is that a 40-year-old baby boomer will quickly recognize the logo and be more than willing to let loose a few quarters to share some enjoyment with his little ones. And we have some more surprises in licensed games. It's always a bit more fun to have a few surprises for release at upcoming trade shows.

The upside is that operators now have a greater number of locations suitable for ride placement and an avenue for placing older rides in previously less desirable locations. Rotation is vital and a key to higher revenue; every three or four months is the standard.

The days of dropping off a ride and leaving it three or four years are gone. The future is looking better than ever, the industry is strong and gaining momentum, and the trend will continue for some time. If an operator is willing to put in the effort to upgrade equipment and rotate product, he'll be rewarded with the profitability that kiddie rides can produce. ▲

Coin-op kiddie rides: from the Sandy Horse to licensed rides



Now this is what it's all about! Children love their little friends, the Muppet Babies.

Tom Dudley
Kiddie Amusements/
EMT Kiddie Rides

If you were to ask any coin-op industry "old timer" to describe a kiddie ride, he would most likely say "a *Bally* or *Sandy Horse* that sat out in front of the local grocery store that didn't work most of the time." Today, the quality and image of our industry has changed dramatically, with store managers and business managers now realizing the profit opportunities in kiddie rides.

EARLY DAYS

The beginning of the coin-operated kiddie ride business can be traced back to the 1930s, when the concept of the stand-alone horse ride was reportedly developed by a carnival operator who took a horse off of one of his Carousel rides and designed a single-base horse ride. Unfortunately, this man never received the credit he deserved because his first prototype ride reportedly was stolen out of his warehouse.

Regardless of its origin, the first stand alone kiddie rides were the *Bally Horse* and the United Tool *Sandy Horse*, which began appearing around 1948. My life in the kiddie ride business began around 1964, when my father and I purchased a number of used Memphis Health Rider machines. These full carousel-size horse rides were the first "kiddie rides" we purchased.

By the late 1960s, a group of us had discovered that a business could be made in refurbishing and restoring used *Sandy Horse* rides which we purchased (inexpensively) from amusement businesses. In time, we found that these rides could earn money and had a place on our bulk vending routes. The placement of these pieces on my route was the beginning of my 33 years in the kiddie ride business.

ROLLING WITH THE CHANGES

Like all industries, the kiddie ride business has continued to change over the years. Since the first day Bill Swanson (sales manager for Carousel) drove up in his shiny Cadillac, my business has never been the same. Carousel's Norwood Veatch Sr. brought into the business his attractive carousel ride, the introduction of 25-cent play, and the offer of equipment financing. Such innovations helped kiddie ride businesses grow and established my lasting friendship with the Veatch family for three generations.

In the late 1980s, a new competitor to the traditional kiddie ride route operator emerged—the FEC. Located inside, the rides in these businesses looked great and allowed parents to relax, eat something, and watch their children play. In addition, when the children were done playing, they weren't dirty! As the FEC business began to boom, so did sales for kiddie ride manufacturers. The number of manufacturers increased with sales volumes, and a new found respect for the entertainment and earning value of kiddie rides emerged.

The decline of the FEC market led to the next significant development in our market, the licensed ride. Kiddie ride manufacturers, looking to overcome the declining FEC sales, had to create a new concept or idea to excite the market and increase sales. The introduction of such rides as the *Flintstone* series and *Batman* car helped to stimulate

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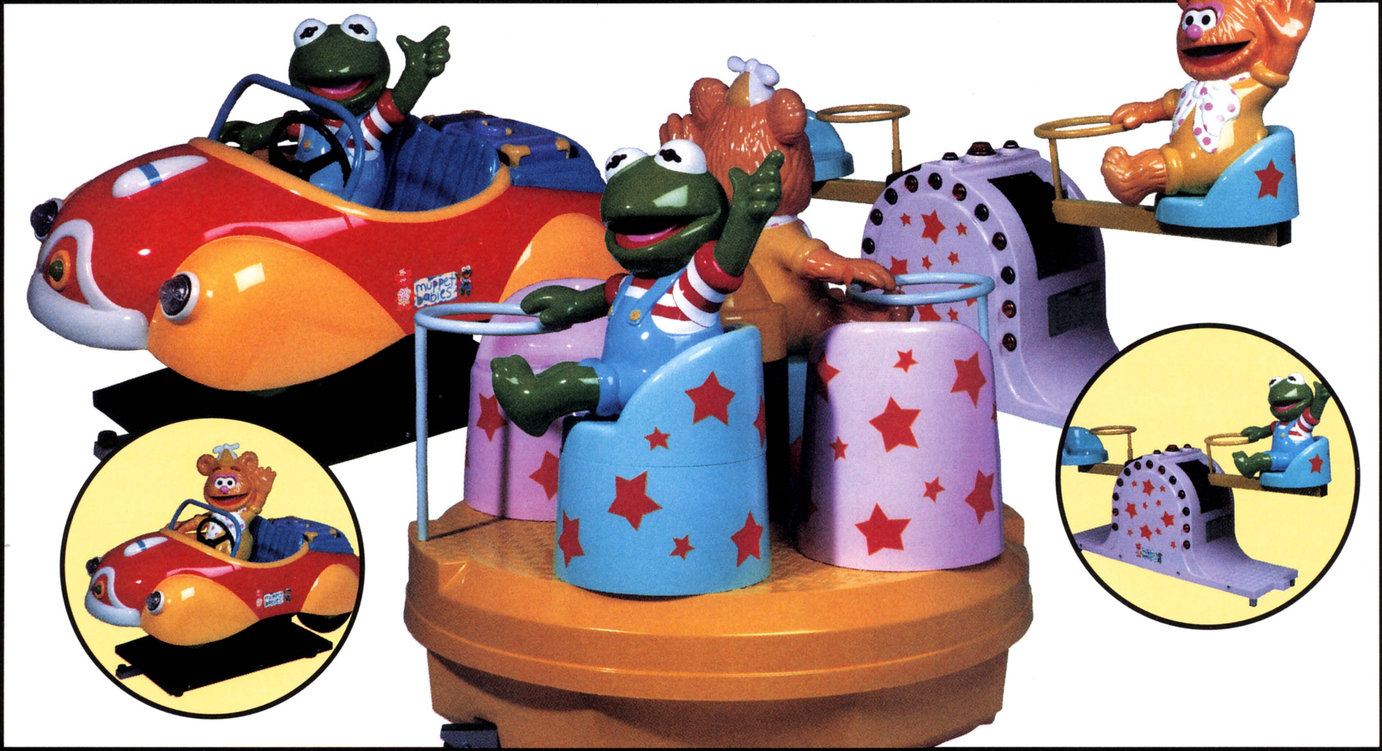

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The Dudley family, (l-r): Tom, Cheryl, and Thomas with the Muppet Babies rides.

sales as these rides earned strong revenues with their appeal to young children. The licensed ride trend continues to this day as manufacturers continue to work to create rides with characters which children enjoy.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

As one of a number of large longtime kiddie ride operators, I've had the opportunity to learn from my successes as well as failures. A few thoughts on maintaining and building a kiddie ride business:

☛ **Inside locations:** As the layout and design of retail operations have changed over the years, the trend has been toward placement inside the store. These inside locations are likely to require new rides. In purchasing kiddie rides for retail locations, be careful to study the needs of your locations, the age group of customers, and who you purchase from. In today's marketplace, the increased number of manufacturers/distributors gives you a much better selection to choose from.

☛ **Licensed rides and ride rotation:** Even though I now sell a licensed ride (EMT's Muppet Babies), I have 20 different licensed rides in my route rotation. The rotation of rides is critical to your success: with fewer rides per location, showing "new" rides to your locations on a regular basis is essential to keeping things fresh and interesting!

☛ **Ride placement:** With floor space limited, proper placement within the location is critical. You must work hand-in-hand with management to place the ride(s) where it will be eye-catching to the child. Although you may encounter some negatives from management, finding the right spot will result in full coin boxes ... and happy management!

☛ **Ride appeal:** With increasing competition for the entertainment dollar, it is important that a kiddie ride provide value to both parents and children. Small children like licensed rides that identify with cartoon characters they watch on TV or elsewhere, and are often frightened by characters that are larger than themselves. To maximize earnings, experiment with a few different licensed characters in the location and choose those ride(s) that earn the most!

☛ **Setup and operation:** Today's kiddie rides are built to higher safety standards and include more devices on the licensed and premium-designed rides. With all the "bells and whistles" it is important to operate them in locations where they won't be abused. During the setup, check to make sure that everything is secured since shipping often results in things coming loose. (To better ensure against this happening, use a reputable moving company or soft-ride trailers when transporting the rides.) Taking a few extra minutes to inspect and secure the rides will save you service calls later.

☛ **Maintenance:** In plain old southern English, anyone can maintain a kiddie ride. As a manufacturer/distributor I have personally walked customers who don't know a screwdriver from a pliers through detailed ride checks without a problem. By working with a strong manufacturer, you will receive the support necessary to operate and maintain your rides.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

As we look ahead, I feel that the kiddie ride industry is on a steady climb to a new world of rides that haven't even been thought of yet. As my colleague at EMT, Ulli Kunnecke, notes: "The kiddie ride market will continue to expand further as new concepts provide the operators with new locations to equip."

As kiddie ride operators, we must lead the market in these new directions that offer significant business opportunities for all of us. As a company, I consider ourselves small but growing, with a team of players working together to make tomorrow brighter. We are small in number and need more players to join us ASAP but we are working to be the best. Our goal is to help our industry grow as one big family, helping each other as in years past to become something above average in the amusement industry.

One of the best ways to stay in tune with what's going on in the kiddie ride industry is to join the National Kiddie Ride Association (NKRA). Bill or Kay Chiles will be glad to direct you toward the right people who can help you. If you are looking for new and adventurous ways to make a living, or to increase your present income, may I be the first to invite you to take a look around the kiddie ride market. It's not too long before the fall trade shows start and not too late for you to attend one. ▲

The evolution of the kiddie ride industry

Eric Torres
Kiddie's Manufacturing Inc.

Kiddie rides have been around since the early '60s when they were mostly seen at the local corner supermarket (*Bally Horse*) and cost 10 cents a ride. In the late '60s and early '70s some local companies were manufacturing in-house just to supply their own demand. They had the locations and they built rides (usually in the shape of horses, trucks, cars, trains, or planes) for their own use. Marketing and selling their in-house rides was not their objective, however. Then the real force came about this time from companies importing rides primarily from Europe that introduced music and light effects.

It was only a matter of time before U.S. manufacturers would introduce their own series of new rides, combining traditional ride features with European innovations. The kiddie ride industry in the United States evolved from in-house to the factory set-up. There are still some small shop kiddie ride manufacturers but the market today demands consistent quality, product liability insurance coverage, UL certification, ride creativity, and innovations, things that in the long run will make the small shop obsolete as a viable supplier.

The kiddie ride industry is actually a segment of the games and entertainment industry. Coin-op kiddie rides effectively combine the characteristics of vending with entertainment for children. The industry consists of distributors selling vending equipment to operators/vendors; companies and individuals who operate in arcades and family entertainment centers; and independent operators who operate equipment mostly in regional and national chain stores.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

There are three key factors to success in the kiddie ride industry:

☛ **Location:** The equipment should generally be in high traffic, high visibility areas.

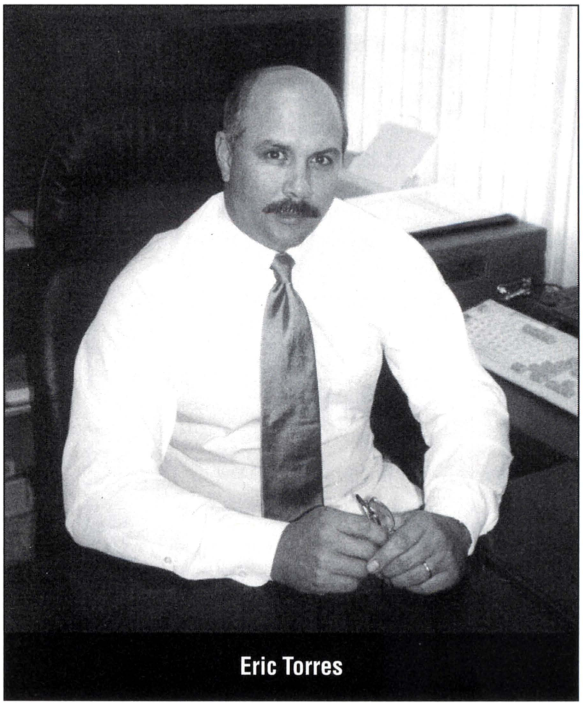
☛ **Type of ride:** Since the introduction of licensed rides, the industry's changed dramatically. The operator will find a great location but needs the ride to have character recognition (like *Spiderman*) to obtain big numbers. In a nutshell, you can't expect the high collections from the old kiddie car painted green or the old yellow horse.

☛ **Coin vend:** If the kiddie ride business is to continue to be a viable business and grow, the vend must be at least 50 cents. The cost of operating a vending route business has increased in geometric proportions, making it even more imperative than ever that the coin drop sales generated cover these escalating expenses and deliver a decent profit margin.

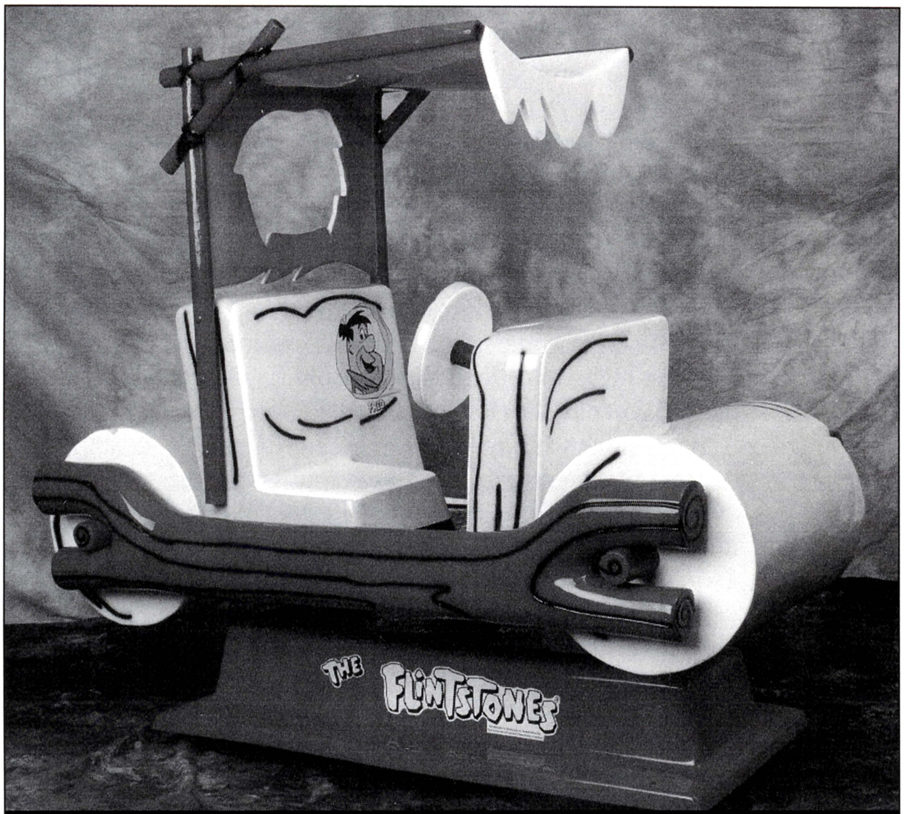
Kiddie rides are only a fraction of the coin-op business as a whole. Rides must compete for the dollars available to operators who will base their purchasing decisions on return on investment.

The real evolution of the kiddie ride business took place with the introduction of the Flintstones series of licensed rides. Prior to Flintstones we saw other concepts in the United States that impacted the industry. There were the the private label Wal-Mart and the Toys R Us trucks and the Geofrey Wave Runner. These new concepts helped position and secure the ride within the location.

The private label concept brought identity and respect to our small, yet emerging kiddie ride industry. It helped the operator secure an inside location where the ride required less maintenance, could be



Eric Torres



The *Flintmobile* stars our favorite prehistoric father, Fred Flintstone.

operated all year long, and generated more income. The private label concept also helped capture the attention of major national chain stores who previously wanted nothing to do with kiddie rides. This concept had a major impact on how the industry is perceived today.

The quantum leap for the kiddie ride industry was the introduction of the licensed character kiddie ride. Let's face it, children are the driving force of this industry but we also have to attract the attention of the adult who will drop the coin and the operator who will purchase and place the ride. The licensed ride has it all. The child will identify with the ride because he is exposed to the character day in and day out; the adult dropping the coin relates to the character and feels rewarded by watching the smile on the child's face; and the operator understands that this newly created synergy will translate into a faster return on investment. And let's not forget the location manager who has it all—a satisfied customer and additional profits. It's a win/win experience. It's what business is all about.

THE FUTURE

Being part of this emerging industry has not been easy. As a company we have had to struggle and overcome many obstacles. I remember when we made a private label ride in the shape of a shoe and heard comments like: "Who would want to ride in a shoe?" To say the least, the shoe got the operator into a national chain which at the time had no kiddie rides. Those rides generated a significant amount of income for operators who had the vision and took the chance. In short, lots of kids were thrilled to ride in a shoe and it was a total success.

What's ahead? Now that's something to think about! There is plenty of room for innovation as the future brings more opportunities. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that the next generation of kiddie rides will be much more innovative, interactive, and educational. This is a fact. However, we can't subscribe exclusively to these ingredients. Children will always be attracted to the classic characters like Spiderman, The Hulk, and X-Men. They've been here for decades and will be here for decades to come.

We all have to keep in touch with the trends and keep our eyes open for opportunity. By "all" I mean manufacturers, location managers, distributors, and operators. At Kiddie's we can assure the industry that you haven't seen anything yet! ▲

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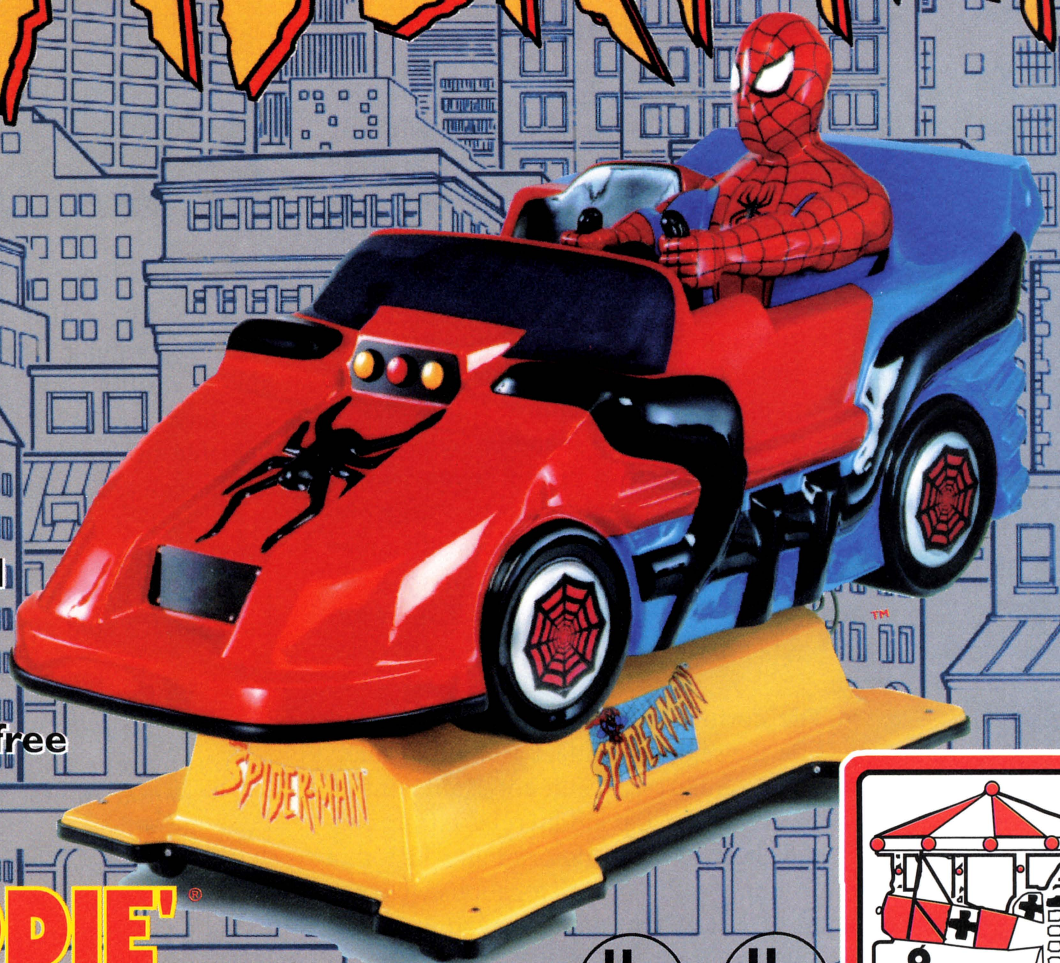

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Looking into the future of the kiddie ride industry

Steven Veatch
Carousel International

The kiddie ride industry has grown tremendously. A good example is the number of manufacturers and distributors exhibiting at trade shows today. A short 10 years ago there would be three, maybe four, exhibitors. Today there are up to 20 or more kiddie ride manufacturers and distributors at trade shows.

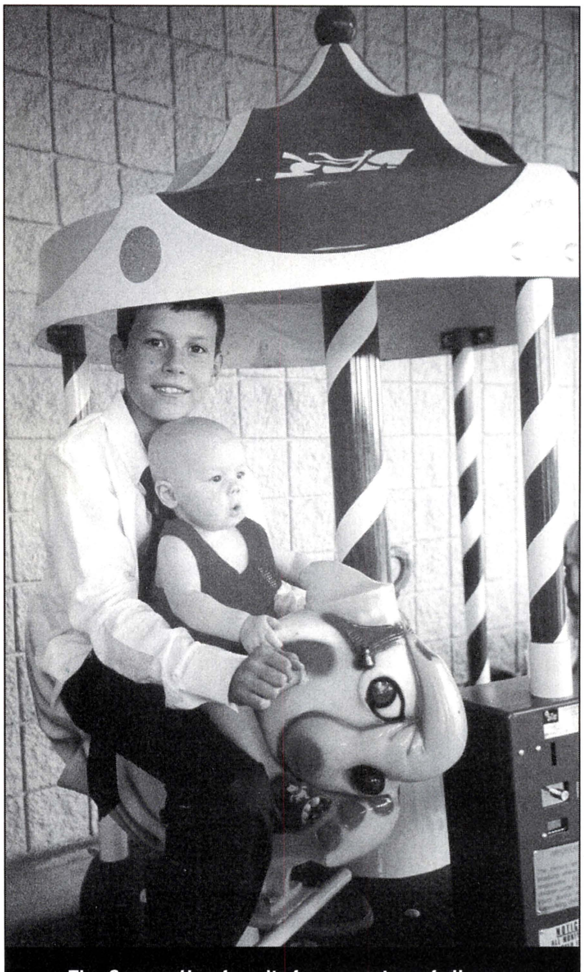
The future for the kiddie ride industry is indeed promising at this time. Unlike other amusement equipment, which requires constant rotation and replacement to maintain satisfactory revenue, kiddie rides have several advantages:

☛ Kiddie rides appeal to the two- to eight-year-old age group, which is not normally targeted by other amusement devices. Grandparents, who might never enter a game room, are especially fond of making a child happy by paying for a ride.

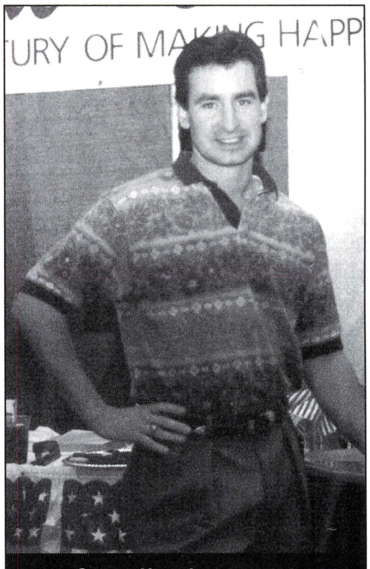
☛ The normal birth rate provides new customers for the same equipment year after year.

☛ Malls, retail stores, and entertainment attractions are aware that kiddie rides attract children and are often the determining factor in where a family shops. These locations welcome equipment that will attract new customers and help to build repeat business.

☛ Often parents will reward their children with a ride on coin-operated kiddie rides in return for good behavior while they shop, thereby creating larger sales and increased income for both the location and the operator.



The *Carousel* is a favorite for youngsters of all ages.


URY OF MA G HAPP

Steven Veatch at a recent trade show

☛ Kiddie rides can be operated outside. Locations do not have to devote valuable inside space to the rides. Kiddie rides often gross more dollars per square foot than any merchandise sold inside.

☛ Kiddie rides require much less maintenance and parts replacement than other amusement equipment. However, when purchasing rides operators should make sure that parts will be readily available when needed. Many operators have been disappointed to learn that the manufacturer, importer, or distributor of the ride that was purchased at a bargain price is no longer in business. ▲

There's a kiddie ride for every location

John Nelson

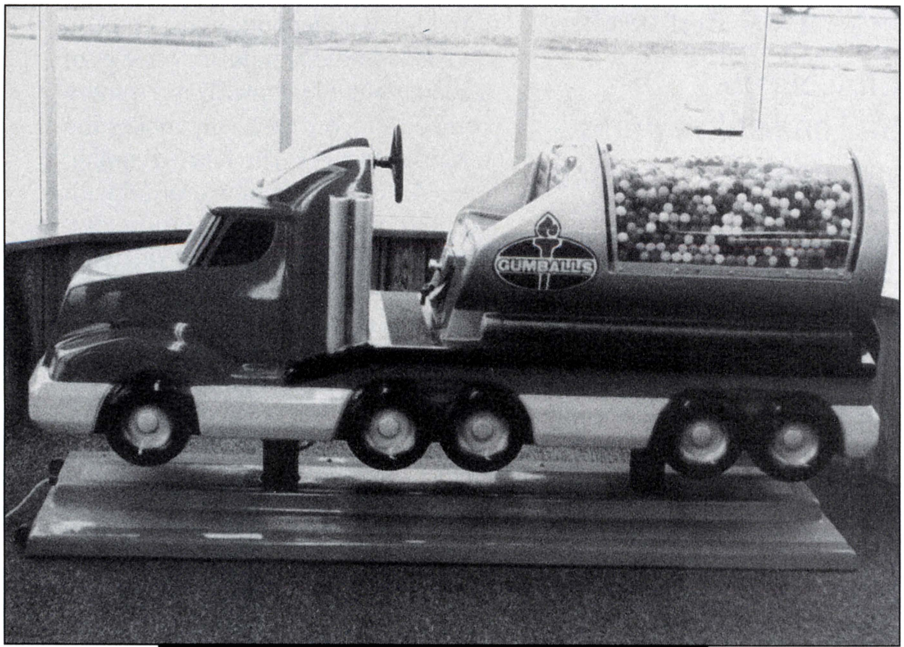
John Nelson
Astro Distributong

I remember reading that there are more kids between the ages of one and six than there ever has been before. And that's why I think that you can find so much sustainable growth in the kiddie ride industry.

Another factor perpetuating the growth is the concern felt by all parents about the rampant crime and their focus on safety. Let's face it, you simply can't let your kids out on the street like you could in the past. So parents are going out of their way to entertain their chilcren while keeping an eye on them. By no means is there a downturn in kiddie ride customers, and we've only scratched the surface of where to place the rides. Have you ever been in England? Kiddie rides are virtually everywhere. I'm not thinking it will be like that here, but I'm hoping it will.

Manufacturers sometimes try to convince their customers about what parents and kids are looking for in a ride. It's a good question without a doubt, but from my humble experience I see some operators being given wrong information. Here's an example, my four-year-old can see an old horse in front of a store and doesn't care what it is, he wants to ride. But he will not understand if the ride doesn't work. There's nothing worse than placing your child on a ride that is not marked out-of-order and it doesn't work. The kid is devastated.

We're dealing mainly with those under five. Once they've hit six or so, their interest is waning. But those under five are a solid customer base. It's up to us to provide the safest and best kiddie rides possible. Does a $35 a week location deserve a $3,500 ride? Of course not.



Astro's *Gumball Tanker*

Reconditioned kiddie ride done at Astro Dist.

But at the same time that location doesn't deserve a dilapidated ride with all the paint chipping away that only works half the time. Every location, whether it's a $35 a week location or a $250 one, deserves the best for its money.

Operating kiddie rides is relatively easy if you keep them clean and working. What I advocate is the right choice with an emphasis on quality. We're presenting a product to the public and it should be a quality product. The operator should take pride in what he puts there.

Operators contemplating getting into the kiddie ride business should take advantage of the experience out there. For instance, when an operator comes to me I have a whole set of questions to determine his needs. I don't want to recommend a ride that I know won't be good for him. I live by the motto that's it's easier to sell to a current customer than to cultivate a new one. And to sell to current customers I have to give them good advice.

> "You can't put a kiddie ride in a mortuary and expect to make money."

If I lie to them, it won't be long before they won't be coming back to me for advice or product. I feel so strong about this that I'd rather tell a customer not to buy a ride than to sell him one I know won't produce the return on investment he needs.

The kiddie ride industry consists of a good group of people. There is more competition, but that only makes the business stronger. The future is unlimited. We've broken new ground with licensed product. But we must be cautious about what we build. You can't keep building more expensive rides and expect the market to keep paying those high costs.

The best players will rise to the top as customers decide for themselves. Operators must be comfortable with who they are dealing with. You can't put a kiddie ride in a mortuary and expect to make money, but if kids are in your location and you're not offering kiddie rides you are leaving money on the table. ▲

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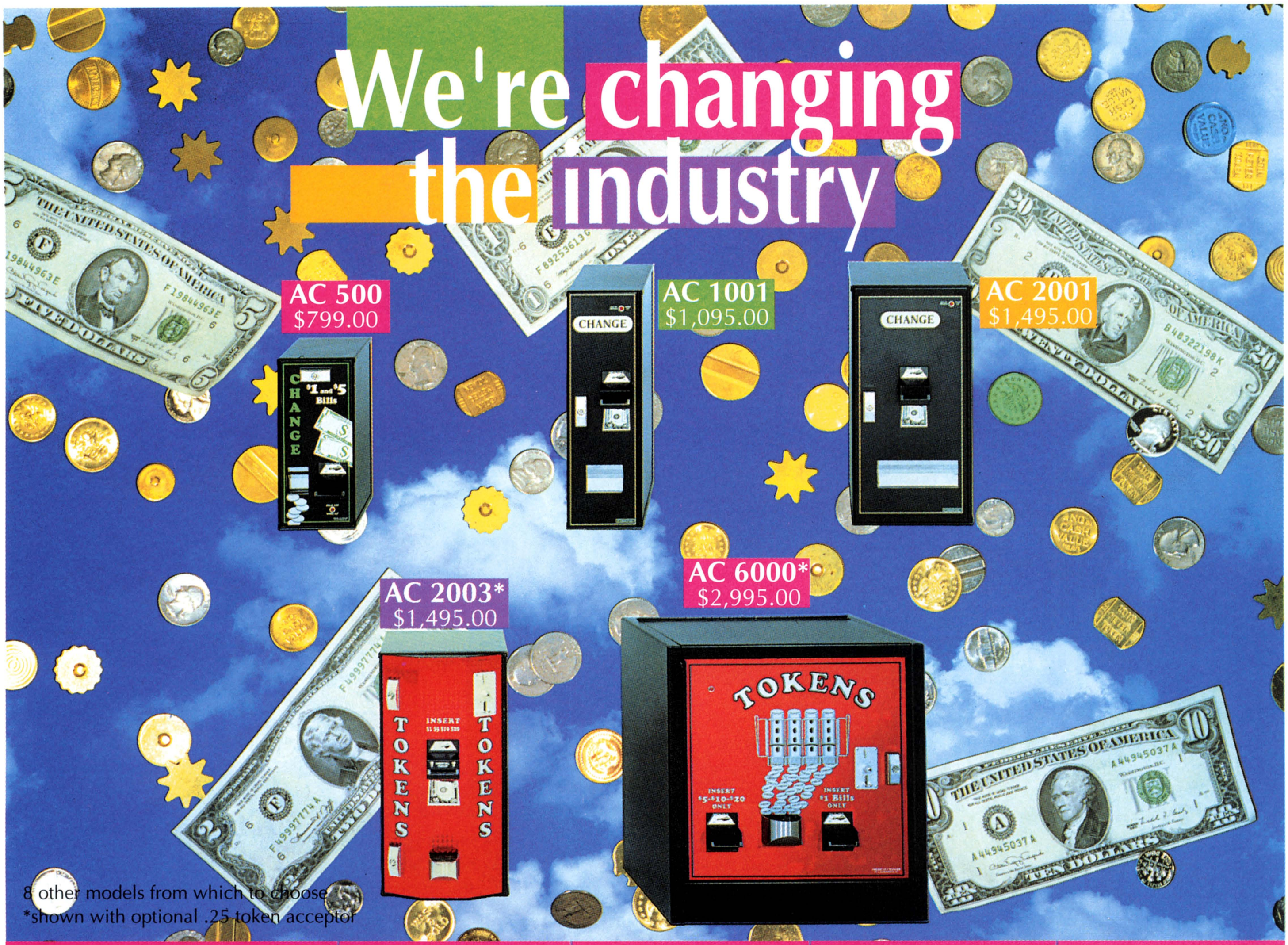

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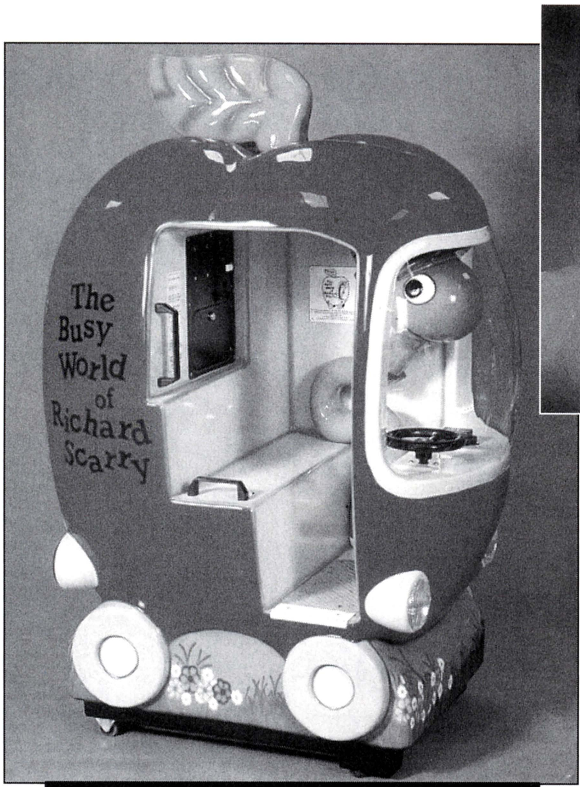
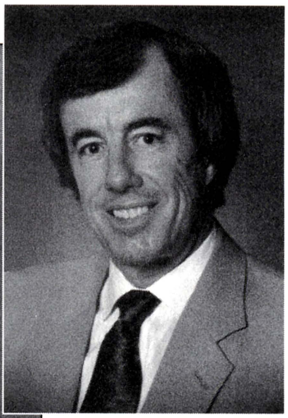


Richard Scarry's *Lowly Worm and his Apple Car*



Kiddie rides more popular than ever

Thomas Theisen
Theisen Vending Co.

Kiddie rides are more popular now than ever as we're living in a baby boom age of heightened family involvement and an increasing demand for more children's entertainment.

Many locations find that kiddie rides are a simple solution to entertaining children between the ages of three and 10. The residual effect–a happier, entertained child means a happier, more relaxed guardian which equates to more money spent in a location.

As a distributor for the prestigious Jolly Roger and R. G. Mitchell kiddie rides, we have a front row seat to view all current trends. As a demand for more sophisticated kiddie rides has been satisfied, more opportunities for placements have been created. Manufacturers have exhibited a greater awareness to safety standards resulting in coin mechanisms contained within the kiddie ride, solid bases built for the bottom of the kiddie ride, and better mechanics producing a smoother motion. Once the basics were perfected, new styles were introduced.

Licensed character kiddie rides, activity screens, and two passenger kiddie rides are extremely popular. Last year in an equipment poll taken by the National Kiddie Ride Association, Richard Scarry's *Apple Car*, manufactured by Jolly Roger and distributed by Theisen, took first place as the best indoor kiddie ride, best licensed kiddie ride, highest earning kiddie ride, and co-runner up for best new design. Co-runner up for best indoor kiddie ride was *Garfield* by Jolly Roger. Many of R.G. Mitchell kiddie rides have activity screens and two passenger rides which have plumped sales dramatically.

The crystal ball at Theisen Vending Co. shows a continued bright future for kiddie rides. Over the years the universal coin drop has changed from 25 cents to 50 cents for each ride. Operators have found it is important to buy from distributors who know the market trends, sell popular and well-built equipment, and will be there for any needs following the sale. Theisen Vending took first place last year by the NKRA for best kiddie ride service and support.

Coming attractions? Watch for Theisen Vending to introduce four new licensed character kiddie rides in October at the AMOA trade show in Atlanta. ▲

There's still a large market for kiddie rides

The *Fire Truck* is irresistable.

Clara Fernandez
Falgas U.S.A. Inc.

The kiddie ride industry has evolved tremendously since Industrias Falgas became involved in manufacturing amusement rides 35 years ago. But one thing that was true then and remains vital today is that manufacturers must be dedicated to producing rides for the entertainment of children worldwide and must be acutely aware of safety and good service.

Manufacturers today absolutely must be aware of the modern marketplace demands for quality and must especially be aware of the needs and demand from operators and parents in addition to the young riders.

I asked Dorothy Michelle, a four-year-old, what models she preferred and which specific rides she liked best, her answer: "I like them all," especially when they have a horn, a steering wheel, and music. Then I asked her what she didn't like about any kiddie ride. Her answer: "I don't like the ones that are out-of-order!" Out of the mouths of babes! I couldn't have said it better myself.

Although the industry has become very competitive in the past 10 years, there is still a large market out there for kiddie rides. I have noticed a growth of people from other industries becoming aware of having a small area in their business for entertaining children. There is definitely hope for the future of the kiddie ride industry where many can profit if they study the marketplace and meet its demands plus comply with the demands of the experienced operator in the industry. That may sound easy, but it's hard work. The same hard work you should expect to encounter when running a successful kiddie ride business. ▲

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NATIONAL CRANE NETWORK OPENS A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES

Joe Bates, president of NCN and Plush 4 Play.

Marketing to children, from toddlers to teens, has never been easy. But now it's become a downright science. Children are a thriving customer base for a number of reasons. According to a recent report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a family spends the largest percent of discretionary income on restaurants and entertainment; nearly 18,000 baby boomers are turning 50 per day, and are doting grandparents seeking ways to make their grandchildren happy; and children are more media savvy than ever before.

Media fortified children today have tremendous influence over their parents and grandparents. They have more say in where the family eats, how they are entertained, and even what prizes they want to win.

Joe Bates of Plush 4 Play saw the skill crane business booming and the orders for plush at an all-time high. His keen sense of the industry led Bates to create National Crane Network, as he explains, "to give something back to the operators who helped build my company and were the foundation for its growth." National Crane Network answered the question posed by operators who are taking a fresh look at these young customers: "How do we expand our business?"

The National Crane Network concept is so simple Bates calls it "Child's Play." It's an entertainment center consisting of a skill crane and superior Plush 4 Play stuffed toys. It's the perfect solution for interactive entertainment, while promoting return visits. National Crane Network is described as a crane distributor and marketing company. Here's how it works: A full-time administrative staff scouts out locations across the country. Once a location has signed a contract, NCN provides its member/operators with the account, offers marketing support, and equipment and merchandise discounts. The best part is that membership is free to operators.

NCN spokesperson Rick Barry, NBA star.

Plush 4 Play offers the finest quality plush.

Operators benefit from National Crane Network's expertise, while they are only asked in return to strictly adhere to the quality standards set forth in the membership guidelines. This includes maintenance, service, and restocking specifications. "By adhering to standards of service for all of their locations, we can offer operators access to national and regional accounts," Bates explained.

SIGNING UP

Operators obviously like what they see since hundreds have signed up so far. All potential NCN operators attend the National Crane Network University at the company's California headquarters for a day-long orientation. NCN sets forth its guidelines, provides in-depth product description, answers technical questions, and educates on accounting procedures, marketing, merchandising, and gives a tour of the corporate offices. "This session allows operators to know exactly what they're getting into before they sign on as an NCN member," Bates explained. "That way they can make a decision to join based on what they see firsthand. I'm also excited about our NCN University video library. With these videos we can assist the owner and help him expand."

National Crane Network provides operators with a membership application as either a primary or secondary member. Once the application is approved, the operator chooses a territory and primary members are given first right of refusal on all locations that NCN secures in that territory. If a primary member passes on a location, then the secondary operator may take the account. "That way," Bates said, "if a primary operator can't take the account because he already has too many or can't service it properly, the secondary operator secures the location and both can coexist within the same territory."

Accounting department, (l-r): Kristi Porras (assistant to the controller), Carol de Jong (controller), and former employee Lisa Boyer.

Once the location is secured and passed to one of its members, National Crane Network provides a high-quality crane, fills it with plush merchandise, and the operator is on his way. "Operators who become members of National Crane Network benefit in many ways from discounts on equipment and plush, highest quality cranes, and the finest plush. An innovative marketing group, technical support, and a dedicated team make National Crane Network a dynamic company ready to accomplish any goal," Bates exclaimed.

HISTORY

Bates is often asked how he continues to thrive in a fluctuating economy. "It's simple," he notes. "We laid a strong foundation." That foundation began in 1988 when the new Plush 4 Play operated from a modest 2,500-square-foot building. And though small, Bates had lofty goals to become one of the leaders in the plush toy industry. He's fulfilled even his most optimistic expectations going from five employees to over 32 and now occupying 46,000 square feet of warehouse space and another 3,200 for offices. If the present growth is any indication, it looks like the company will soon be preparing for another move. Why the expansion? Bates explained, "We concentrate daily on two important business tenets: offering the best product at a reasonable price and maintaining the highest quality of service in the industry.

Bates has applied his business philosophies to National Crane Network. Wanting to give something back to the operators who established him as a leader in plush, he recently launched a new ad campaign for National Crane Network. "Show me the Money" is aimed at operators and "Your New Profit Center" targets restaurant chains, discount chains, and supermarkets. "The phone has not stopped ringing," Bates said. "We even had calls from customers who wanted to purchase the crystal crane we created especially for our ads!"

Operators may not be able to buy the crystal crane, but what they get from National Crane Network was developed for one purpose—to build the operators' businesses like they've built Plush 4 Play's. Bates added, "We can cover the whole country and this gives operators a golden opportunity to grow their business many times over. Working as a group, we build each other's businesses."

A team of professionals and a formula for success will bring National Crane Network and Plush 4 Play into the next century with new ideas and money-making opportunities for operators. National Crane Network is for the kid in all of us, especially Joe Bates who loves what he does as much as your little customers will love the Child's Play entertainment center! ▲

Information for this article was supplied by Heidi Haller, director of marketing for the National Crane Network/Plush 4 Play.

From left: Heidi Haller (director of marketing), Ty Bishop (general manager), Sally Eberhard (membership coordinator), and Jeff Boze (credit manager/administrative assistant).

"Media fortified children today have tremendous influence over their parents and grandparents."

Product consultants, (l-r): Dick Pirics, Georgia Orozco, Joyce Bond, and Ken Christensen.

NCN staff support, (l-r): Kristen Regan, Michelle Lopez, Dorian Ranta, and Alcia Gonzalez.

GUEST
COMMENTARY

SHOPPING CENTER PLAYGROUNDS

Who? What? Where? How?

**Scott Forbes
Delta Play Ltd.
Surrey, B.C. Canada**

The emerging importance of soft modular playgrounds in shopping centers has prompted many significant questions by shopping center owners as well as family entertainment center operators. Following are answers to those inquiries:

Who are the customers you must attract to support your facility?

A thorough understanding of local demographics should be a critical part of the planning and decision-making process. Factors such as average or median local family incomes and age groups will have a direct impact on anticipated revenues. This information should be available from local city hall records or building departments.

What features should your play facility provide?

The only limitation is your imagination. Development of a business plan and the size of your capital budget will have a significant impact on the personality of your facility. Revenue planning and operation cost forecasting are considerations that will come into play as you weigh various alternatives for your project.

A few of the areas to consider are day care, drop off, play equipment capacity, arcade and redemption games, food services, layout and operations, staffing and visibility, and special attractions and programs.

Remember, you only want to build your facility once so that apart from equipment retrofits and facility upgrades, you will enjoy a profitable facility requiring minimal staffing and maintenance.

Where should you put your facility?

Depending on whether you place your play center in a large shopping center or strip mall, you need to think of these elements: parking, signage (interior and exterior), accessibility, and operating hours.

Not many shopping centers are open 9 a.m.-9 p.m. seven days a week. A separate entrance with high visibility should be a consideration for a strip mall location.

How do I go about deciding on a play system?

Few playground companies can provide comprehensive facility designs, furnishings, theming and decor items, or education and interactive play events. Therefore, you should be cautious in selecting your supplier.

Financial stability: unfortunately, there are many marginal suppliers in the soft modular play industry. To protect yourself you should carry out some due diligence investigation before committing your play equipment and investment dollars to a supplier.

> *"You only want to build your facility once, so that apart from retrofits and upgrades you will enjoy a profitable facility requiring minimal staffing and maintenance."*

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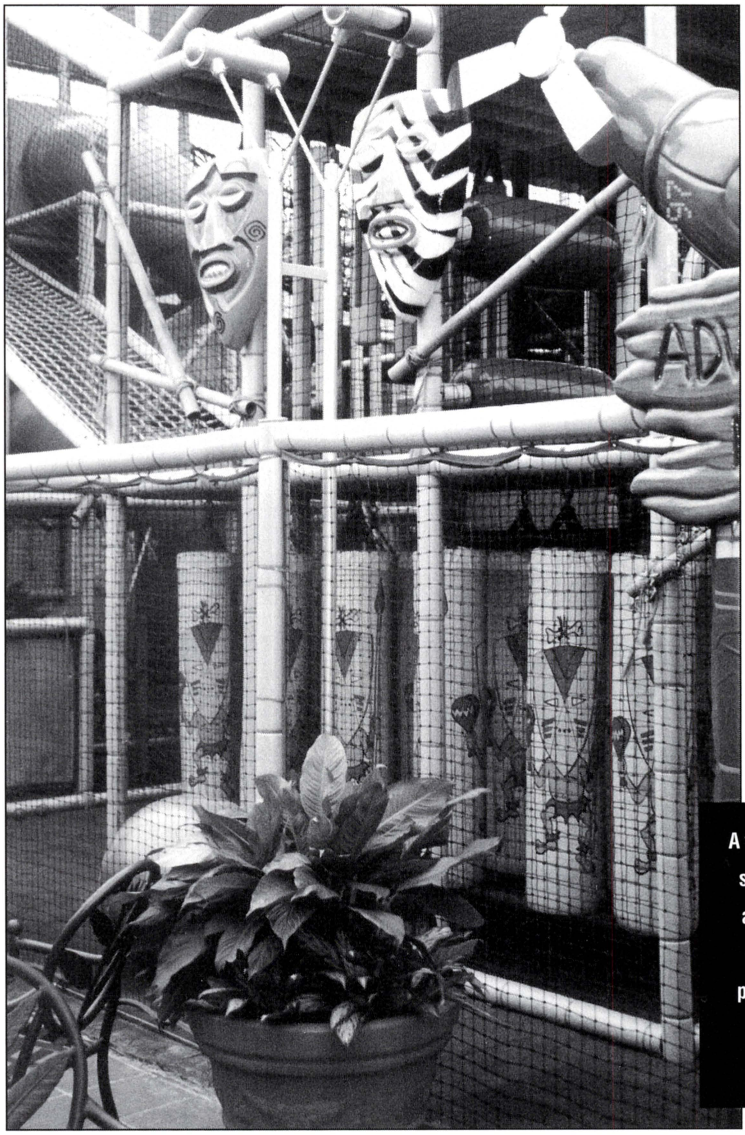
Ordinary common sense inquiries into issues such as customer references, supplier credit references, bank references, financial strength, and length of time in the industry are critical steps and will assist you in making the correct choice.

If you receive a warranty on your purchase you will want to make sure you can deal quickly and efficiently with a company that is able to support you. Also, be sure the company insurance is adequate and policies are current

Equipment: Be sure that you follow established industry standards as guidelines in selecting soft modular play equipment. For example, a 30-inch tube and a four-foot grid are standard in the industry.

Reputable suppliers will use only premium materials. Selection of non-standard components, odd sizes, or inferior finishes may be cheaper, but can prove more costly in the long term in the form of more frequent repair and replacement expenses.

Some suppliers also provide educational and interactive components. The ability to change out or add a theme to your equipment also is a very important element for long-term success.



A typical themed shopping mall application of soft modular play structures by Delta Play Ltd.

Design and creativity: The best suppliers release new play events, material upgrades, and retrofit ideas on a regular and ongoing basis. Along with themed components, interactive and educational events, this will keep you ahead of your competition. Also, look for the latest in safety items to ensure your play system meets local fire and health codes.

Suppliers to major restaurant chains such as Burger King and McDonald's also must offer engineering services in order to ensure structural stability, capacity, wind sheer ratings, and meet other criteria.

These engineering services can provide a smooth transition through city planning and permit departments. Not all play systems require engineering, but companies that adhere to engineering on a regular basis are more likely to offer a structurally sound play structure.

Don't forget the little things, such as safety ties, pipe padding on all exposed steel, and no-climb netting where applicable.

If you follow the basics you can put together a winning concept for your shopping center location. ▲

> *"The ability to change out or add a theme to your equipment is an important element for long-term success."*

National Ticket Co.'s history SPANS THIS CENTURY

VALERIE COGNEVICH

If you thought National Ticket Co. was born to accommodate the rather new ticket redemption phenomenon, you'd be waaay off track. The company, in fact, dates back to the early 1900s, an era noted for its "dime" novels. In fact, one such book marked the beginning of what would become National Ticket Co.

Here's the story as told in the company's brochure:

In 1905 William A. Conway of Shamokin, Pa., wrote a fictionalized account of an unsolved murder in his hometown. His two brothers, Alphonsus E. and John J. Conway printed the novel, "Murder at Hickory Ridge" in the garage that served as the Conway Print Shop.

With the profits from the sale of the dime novel, the three Conway brothers started the Black Diamond Publishing Co. They disseminated news of the anthracite coal region through the printing of their Black Diamond Magazine.

About this time, movies were becoming popular in the Shamokin area and, of course, the movie theaters needed tickets to sell for the shows. Alphonsus rigged an existing press with additional parts from a Maytag wringer washing machine to print continuous roll tickets, allowing the company to expand to serve this new theater industry as well as others.

One of the first large volume orders for the fledgling company came from the Hazelton Baseball Club, which requested tickets printed on green paper. With no cash to buy new paper, the brothers turned to Nicholas R. Ludes, a successful Shamokin clothing merchant. Ludes not only bankrolled the paper purchase for the Conway brothers, but became partners with them in the incorporation of National Ticket Co. in 1907.

For nearly 100 years the company has been a family-owned enterprise and Ludes and Conway heirs have remained active in National Ticket Co. to this day. Presently, J. Edward Ludes, third generation and grandson of original founder Nicholas Ludes, is president; Edward A. Ludes, fourth generation, serves as plant manager; Timothy Timco, fourth generation, is sales manager; Mike Timco, fourth generation, is a supervisor; and John Conway, fourth generation, is director of product development. Three Ludes and one Conway serve on the executive committee of the company.

REDEMPTION MARKET

We were anxious to hear more about this amazing company. We contacted Bill Alter, who has been with National for over 35 years and currently runs its sales organization. We should also point out—since you're undoubtedly connecting the name with another company that bears his name—that, yes, he is also president of his own company, Alter Enterprises, known for its line of innovative games. He formed that enterprise with the blessing of National in 1979.

Alter had a date with destiny when he visited an arcade in Asbury Park, N.J., some 25 years ago during his travels with National Ticket. He saw a *Skee-Ball* machine equipped with an automatic ticket dispenser. He was amazed and excited or as Bill describes it "my eyes popped out of

Inside sales staff: (top, l-r): Maureen Mulhall (international sales), Rich Meabon (projects coordinator), Ginger Seidel (CSR), Jane Boris (CSR), Mike Foulds (administrative sales manager), Tracy McIntyre (sales administrator), and Ken Kuznicki (director of administration); (bottom, l-r): Diane Surak (CSR) , Esther Vidot (international sales), Dee Weatherington (CSR), Tanya Banchs (CSR), Melissa Sulick (CSR), Kathy Rothermel (CSR), and Diane Stone (CSR).

my head!" The owner of the arcade, Leon Minogue, explained that Philadelphia Toboggan Co.'s president, John Allen, then the parent company of *Skee-Ball,* was experimenting with an automatic ticket dispenser and it seemed to be an idea whose time had come.

Alter had no doubt that Leon was right and didn't waste any time in driving straight to Mr. Allen's Philadelphia office. Bill offered Philadelphia Toboggan Co. and Allen all the tickets they needed for their experiment and all the assistance National could offer. Bill explains that they went as far as taking a *Skee-Ball* machine into their plant so they could keep up with any changes made. "When they made a change, we'd make that same change on the game we had. That way we could make any adjustments we needed to make the tickets," Bill said.

"I met with Mr. Allen every week for at least six weeks," Bill added. "I felt so sure that this was going to be successful, and National wanted to be right there." Bill chuckles when he recounts this prediction: "I did a market study 25 years ago and made a statement that we would sell 500 million tickets a year! Well, I was wrong. We now have single customers who buy over three BILLION tickets per year."

While Bill is elated with National's success, he is quick to admit that the redemption ticket business "had its share of hiccups!" Like this, for instance. Bill recalls a phone call from John Allen who was upset that a shipment of tickets weren't working in the game. "He was really angry," Bill offered. "I simply told him that we would reprint the job. We had promised our support and assistance and we meant it. However, I think John was a little skeptical at first. He found out that we were as good as our word. I think of that often and realize that we really do pride ourselves on keeping our customers happy, not just when the sale is made, but with customer service, too."

Bill has seen many changes as the redemption market evolved from the first ticket dispenser that was bulky, overengineered, and cost about $400 compared to the sleek, inexpensive, dependable models today. He credits Deltronic Labs for helping the automatic ticket dispensing business really take off.

Bill said, "I remember meeting Steve Horniak of Deltronic at his first trade show and we spent a great deal of time talking about the ticket redemption business. He wanted to get into it and he certainly did.

CONWAY
PRINT

Here's a shot of the Conway Print Shop around the turn of the century.

C O V E R S T O R Y

He reconfigured the ticket dispenser and made it do what it was supposed to do. And although Deltronic probably has the largest market share, it has never gouged the market or taken advantage of its position. Steve remains a close personal friend and we have collaborated on several ventures together."

NEW HORIZONS

Bill tells us that a big part of National's job is knowing what is developing in the market it serves. For instance, the sales force travels quite a bit assessing new developments. He has seen people trying new things with tickets from utilizing a bar code to inventing new ways to promote ticket redemption. And National takes everything into consideration when looking towards the future. "I've seen things that worked and many that didn't. There have been experiments with various paper, sizes, and point values, but in the long run, the industry returns to the standards that have been set."

> **"When you walk into an amusement park, you're in a foreign country and we print their currency. "**

However, Bill points out that National is working on some new innovations and tantalized us with a tidbit of information: One of National's customers had an idea to put each letter of the location name on individual tickets. As the tickets were dispensed, customers would try to collect letters (tickets) to spell the complete name. If successful, they'd win a grand prize. To develop ideas like this the company counts on research and development.

"All research and development is expensive," Bill noted. "That's one of the reasons other companies have not been able to keep up with the industry's demands. A manufacturer must be in a position to invest the necessary time and money and have a commitment to a new concept. National is in that position but our primary goal will always be to make sure that anything we introduce will be viable for the industry and our customers."

Of course, by its very nature of being at the forefront of the redemption craze, National has seen and heard more than most. The company is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to certain nuances of the redemption market. And the company is asked many times for valuable advice. One question Bill says the company is always being asked is, "What is the proper point value of a ticket?"

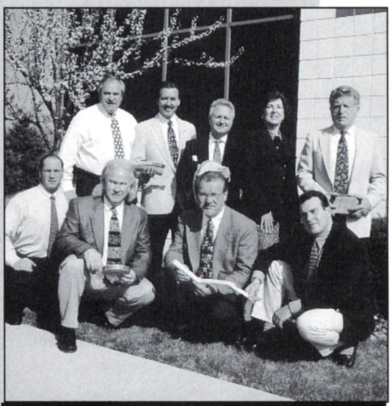
"The standard point value of tickets is, no doubt, one cent," Bill said."But we've seen cases where the target audience consists of very young children and they want to see lots and lots of tickets. It is sometimes wise to lower the point value allowing them to get more tickets in their hands. I've also seen instances where locations attempt to save money on ticket purchases by making the value higher. The logic here doesn't really follow and it could be a negative perception from customers. I usually tell someone in this situation to simply lower the point value on the prizes. It works out the same, but the customer usually gets a higher perceived value."

Although National is more than willing to share any beneficial information with its customers, Bill

National
TICKET CO

Bill Alter, vice president of sales, congratulates Tim Timco, recently promoted to sales manager, and John Conway, director of product development.

Mike Timco, shipping/warehouse supervisor, and Terry Hart, team leader, oversee worldwide shipments of several million tickets each day.



Sales representatives: (top, l-r): Ken Santoro, Denise Duckworth, Thomas Ritz, Bill Owen, and Bill Alter (vice president of sales); (bottom, l-r): John Conway, Gerd Jakuszeit, Bob Anderson, and Tim Timco (sales manager).

stresses that confidentiality is uppermost at the company. "We never divulge any personal information about our customers. We'd never tell anyone how many tickets someone orders, for example. Every employee at National is bonded. I think that says it all."

THE EMPLOYEES

We mentioned that all employees are bonded, but there's a lot more to say about them. For instance, we told you that Bill has been with National for 35 years. It seems like a long time considering how people move around in this industry, but it's just not so at National. In fact, Bill tells us a 35-year employee at National is the norm, not the exception!

National feels that its job goes far beyond simply printing tickets. "We feel that we are printing money. When you walk into an amusement park, you're in a foreign country and we print their currency. We take that responsibility very seriously as do all the employees here. That's why they are so vital to our success."

Why the loyalty from the employees? It's easy to understand when you hear a story from National's history. During the Depression National Ticket never laid off one employee. I'd say that's amazing. The company made sure that if they weren't printing tickets, the employees were cleaning, repairing, or doing whatever else had to be done. Not only does National have many employees who have been with the company for decades, there are entire families who have worked there.

Bill explained to us that the employees are at the top of the list of priorities, right up there with profit. "National has the highest ethics and concern for employees that I've ever seen at a company. When I started here I couldn't believe that people had been working for the company 30, 40, even 50 years! But now that I've been here so many years I realize that National would rather see people lining up at the door to get a job than having people leave because they are unhappy. I truly believe that how National treats its people shows in the final product."

> **"Our primary goal will always be to make sure that anything we introduce will be viable for the industry and our customers."**

THE FUTURE

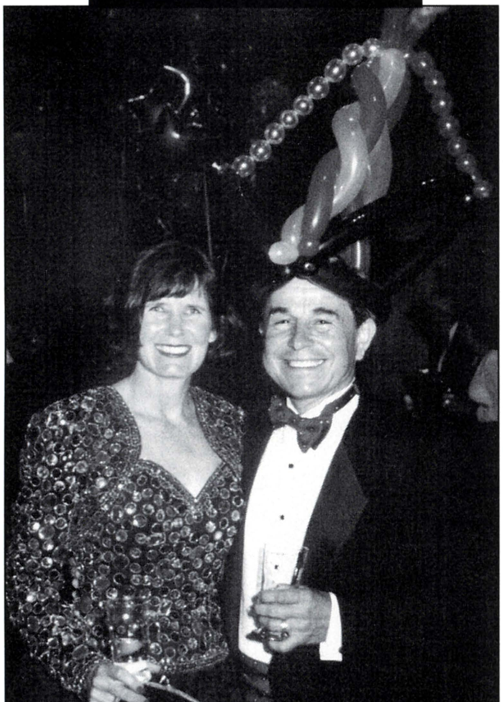
National Ticket Co. began in modest facilities, self-described as a garage constructed of old piano boxes. In 1992 it built new offices and since then has tripled its space. While the company continues to expand, explore new ideas, develop new products, and find its niche in the amusement industry, one thing will never change, National's loyalty to its customers and determination to see them prosper.

This loyalty is deeply ingrained in National, as seen in this poignant story: In 1942 a catastrophic fire destroyed National's facility. Instead of considering moving, then-president Alphonsus Conway insisted in staying within the city limits in gratitude for the city's efforts to save the plant during the fire and its support. The company stayed in Shamokin until 1992 when it finally outgrew available sites. However, it's still just a short drive away. But it's this type of loyalty, to a town, an employee, or a customer that truly sets National apart.

Whether it's a dime novel or a penny ticket, National Ticket Co. has proven that it can handle whatever comes along. The company is ready to accept the inevitable challenges and welcomes opportunities as it prepares to enter its second century of serving its customers. ▲

NEWS **FEATURE**

Silicon Valley ball raises money for charity



Stephanie and Norm Petermeier of Lazer-Tron gave generously of their time and products to benefit 32 worthy charities.

Stephanie Petermeier, wife of Lazer-Tron's president Norm Petermeier, is a member of the Silicon Valley Charity Ball Foundation, which hosted an extravaganza in April to raise money for a number of deserving organizations. Stephanie sent us some photos and a rundown on the black tie event. Those benefiting from the $700,000 raised that night include the Alzheimer's Association, Diabetes Society of Santa Clara Valley, Meals on Wheels, Role Model Program, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Services for the Brain Impaired to name but a few of the 32 recipients.

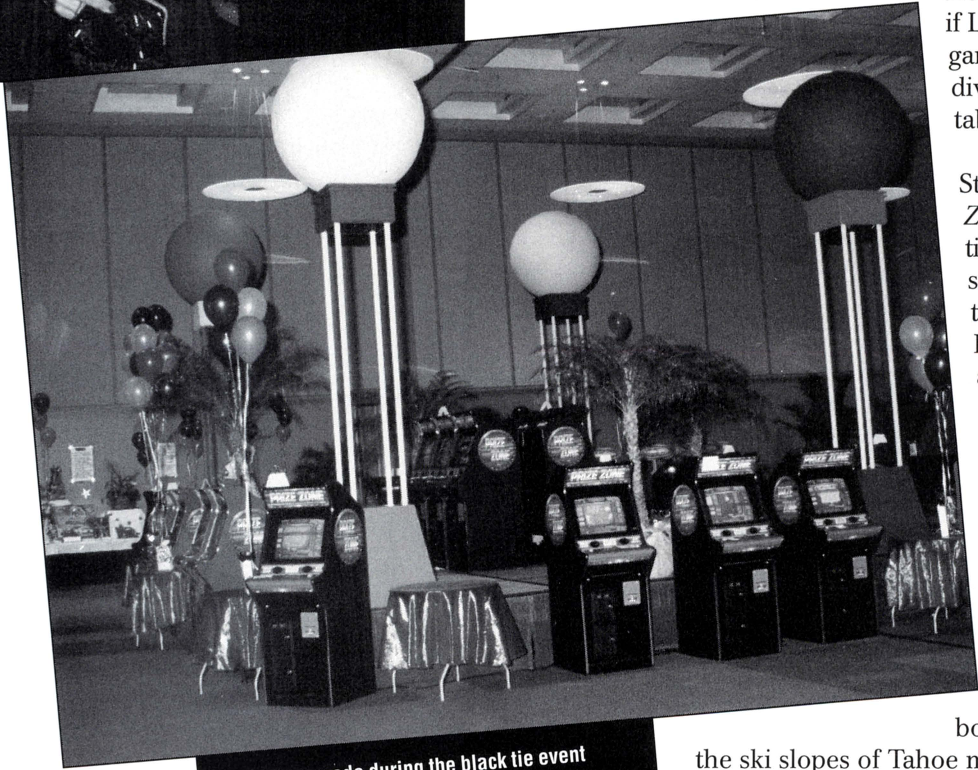
The evening, billed as "A Night Under the Big Top" featured special guest Bill Maher of television's "Politically Incorrect." The circus-themed event had four life-size circus train cages each with a human "animal" like a gorilla, leopard, and cat that interacted with the arriving guests; 19 clowns roaming the floor; two stages with continuous circus acts; fortune telling; low-tech carnival booths; and an arcade room.

The arcade room included 30 of Lazer-Tron's new *Prize Zone* and 14 *Super Solar Spins*, two *San Francisco Rush* videos from Atari, an *Aqua Jet* and two *Alpine Racer IIs* from Namco; and a 25-foot race track with remote control cars provided by Plan-It.

The arcade idea began several years ago when games were incorporated into the history of Silicon Valley. This year Stephanie, who has been active for the organization's 11 years, was asked if Lazer-Tron would help out with a game room to fit the circus theme. Individuals at Lazer-Tron purchase a table at each year's ball.

"The timing was perfect," wrote Stephanie. "Norm predicted that *Prize Zone* would be done just about the time of the event so he committed to send 30 of them. Lazer-Tron customized the *Prize Zone* for the Charity Ball to have 10 years of charity trivia and corresponding photographs as a category on the quiz show. It was a tremendous success."

Stephanie contacted Mike Taylor of Atari and Kevin Hayes of Namco and both eagerly agreed to participate. "The crowd was awed by the realism of the big machines from Namco and Atari," Stephanie noted. "The proximity of Silicon Valley to both the streets of San Francisco and the ski slopes of Tahoe made these games particularly exciting to this high-tech crowd." ▲



The arcade during the black tie event was a crowd pleaser.

STATE SHOW

Missouri hosts FIRST TRADE EVENT

Mark Chan (l) of Williams Bally/Midway with Trina and Jim Bierman of Play Mor Coin-Op by pinball games *Junk Yard* and *Fast Break*.

Steve and Donna Broderson (l) of Wonder Novelty join Al Gietl (c) of Premier Data and Dwayne Zarger of Warehouse of Vending and Games.

From left: Alyssa and Barry Schraier of Warehouse of Vending and Games, Mort Ansky of JVL, Tom and Michelle Cobb of Acme Music, Brian Duke of PlayNet, and Tony Maniscalco of Sega.

The Missouri Amusement Machine Operators Association, which was formed in 1982 and has been a strong association since its inception, welcomed a crowd to its first state show May 16-18 at Marriott's Tan Tar A resort in Osage Beach, Mo., overlooking the Lake of the Ozarks.

A day of golf kicked off the event, while the evening was capped by a lakeside barbecue for operators, distributors, and manufacturers hosted by the Warehouse of Vending and Games. The trade show exhibits were open Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and drew 130 attendees.

The list of exhibitors included American Changer, Arachnid, Atari, Bulldog Amusements, Fun Co., ICE, JVL, Kiddie Rides USA, Konami, Merit, Namco, NSM, Planet Earth, PlayNet, Premier Data, Rock-Ola, Sega, Smart, Valley, and Williams Bally/Midway.

A banquet and dance on Saturday night featured AMOA president Jerry Derrick as the keynote speaker. Dinner entertainment was provided by a comedian from the DeJaVu Comedy Club in Columbia; music was by the St. Louis group, Those Guys.

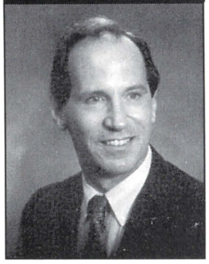
Association president Ron Kinney of Kinney Amusement and Vending thanked all the folks who helped make the event a big success. Plans are already underway for the next show in May 1998. Anyone wishing to participate may contact Kinney, (417)831-0405, or association treasurer Duane Miller of Warehouse of Vending and Games, (314)469-6767. ▲

From left: John Mulvihill of Heartland Amusements, Darren Decatoire of Konami, and Joel Krenzer of Heartland by *Operation Thunder Hurricane*.

By the *Clean Sweep* and *Showcase* cranes: Alyssa Schraier of Warehouse of Vending and Games and Mike Smith of Smart Industries.

Bob Shortell, John Mulvihill, and Joel Krenzer of Heartland Amusements with their families.

LEGAL
EAGLE



Texas Legislature fails to pass ANTI-REDEMPTION BILL

TOM FRICKE

"I got my butt kicked on this one." That's how Sen. David Sibley summed up in the "Dallas Morning News" the results of his sponsorship of a bill targeted at what the Bush administration perceived as abuses of amusement redemption. Two months ago I reported the highlights of Sibley's bill and a related anti-redemption bill sponsored in the House by Rep. Allen Place. Both were iniquitous. The House bill would have revoked a "safe haven" exception to the Texas Gambling Device Law.

The exception provides that if the prize is small enough and is only merchandise, it doesn't matter how the game plays. The Senate bill would have banned video redemption. It would also have banned non-video redemption using games with less than substantial skill involved in play. It would have even banned a long list of prohibited game features and imposed penalties as harsh as those that would apply to some crimes of violence, merely for not having enough skill in your amusement game.

Texas Gov. George W. Bush was responsible for the Sibley bill. "I strongly support this effort to stop back-door attempts to bring casino-style slot machines to Texas," Bush was quoted as saying after a key House vote in favor of his measure ("Cox News Service"). The amusement redemption bill was hotly contested in the Legislature and was kept in the public eye by the press. Seemingly through this year's session, there were hearings and revision after revision of the bills originally introduced. Gov. Bush held a news conference on the subject and personally contacted senators to urge them to vote for his anti-redemption measures. On the last day of the session, an old fashioned until-midnight filibuster kept the anti-redemption measure from coming to a vote in the Senate. The Texas amusement game safe harbor law will not be revoked for at least two more years.

During the hearings, Marshall Caskey, head of the Texas Department of Public Safety's special crimes division stated in effect that the existing law made it impossible to catch violators. At the governor's news conference, Caskey asked rhetorically: "Does Texas law intend for one person to be able to play one time and win hundreds of dollars? If that's what's intended, it's working" ("Austin American Statesman"). This statement went to the heart of the matter but it makes a point for the operator, not for repression. The simple fact is that playing for small merchandise prizes is no longer unacceptable by community standards. (Caskey was referring to a reward which clearly violated the existing law.)

> ***"On the last day of the session, an old fashioned until-midnight filibuster kept the anti-redemption measure from coming to a vote in the Senate."***

Historically, the laws in Texas and elsewhere have provided that wagering at a game of chance is a crime, no matter how small the stake. It follows that it's to be a crime to use or even possess the implements of the wager. But no sooner do you prohibit the practice of gambling than you start making one exception in the law after another. Texas has several. It's lawful in Texas to gamble for stakes—even high stakes—in your home. It's lawful in Texas to gamble at a carnival. Why? Because of a public consensus that these practices are harmless. Since 1993 it has been lawful in Texas to make low-stakes merchandise awards for amusement play without worrying about the label attached to the practice.

The statutes across the land define the prohibited implements of gambling as things which can be used to distribute property by chance. The descriptions are that vague and general. They don't normally prohibit in terms of what the implements or what sort of electrical circuits they have. There have been court-made rules which identify certain prohibited features, but the whole idea of prohibited features is as illusory and non-viable as the concept of prohibiting gambling devices themselves. The concept of prohibiting implements in order to prohibit the practice artificially separates the implements from the practice, and this doesn't work.

Here is an example of what I mean. Let's say you set up a roulette table. You charge people a fee to play roulette. You give out no merchandise and no cash. Lucky players may be able to play longer than unlucky ones. Maybe you put the names of the luckiest players up on a sign. Have you harmed anyone? Of course you haven't. Have you provided entertainment? Yes, you have. Can you tell me why it should be a crime to do this? Can you tell me why gambling is a crime, anyway?

It's generally understood that gambling is a crime because there are too many people who are unable to resist the temptation to wager for a substantial prize. Too many people will do so until they have dissipated everything they own. The law is intended to protect them from themselves. But when the law goes a step further and equates the means of committing the crime with the crime itself, it creates a situation that is unworkable.

In Texas, the Legislature has twice established the state's policy that a little merchandise prize is the legal equivalent of no prize at all. In the Legislative session just ended, thousands of hours of the working time of some of the most talented people in the state were devoted to the task of defining which implements of the crime of gambling should themselves be criminal to possess. In the end, they couldn't do it.

The Sibley bill when introduced, and several substitute versions of the Place bill, sought to define this or that as outlawed *per se* throughout Texas. The proponents of this approach were buying into the same fallacy that has been inherent in the law since gambling first became a crime. They looked at some devices that were actually being used for unlawful gambling and sought to describe them with precision, so that their owners could be readily prosecuted. This would have accomplished no more than to have chased across the state line the devices particularly described. In time, other implements of gambling, not so particularly described in the law, would surely take their place. Accordingly, the proposals of the Bush Administration would not have achieved their apparent purpose. The proposals also sought to return the state to the concept that playing for a trifling prize is nevertheless a crime. The trouble with this is that the public doesn't believe it any more.

The reality is that if you're not going to prohibit playing for inconsequential prizes, and it doesn't make sense to define in the law the implements of prohibited gaming with such precision that they may be readily identified and confiscated, then law enforcement's only option is to do what it should be doing in the first place: investigate and prosecute the practice of unlawful gambling, not merely the implements.

This is why I say Caskey's remark proved the operator's point. He implied that he knew of a case where a single person could win hundreds of dollars on one play. This was clearly against existing law. If he knew of the case, why wasn't owner of the machine and the venue prosecuted? I would think that the answer is, that to prosecute such a violation, an undercover policeman or other witness must see the payoff and be able to prove that the payoff exceeded the limits of the statute. If this is the practice to which the people of Texas object, then the law should be enforced. I am told that in the hearings before the Senate and House committees, the point was made that existing law was too difficult to enforce, but that point was never proved. No briefs were presented. No concrete examples were offered. The committee saw testimony on this point brought forth only generalization and hypothetical.

It may be that under state law, the crime was only a misdemeanor and therefore not worthy of the investigative resources necessary to support a conviction. However, if as trumpeted by the interest group Texans Against Gambling, violations of the prize limitation law were so endemic and such a moral outrage, why would law enforcement nevertheless decline to allocate the resources necessary to enforce the existing law? One answer may be that abuses weren't so endemic, the people as a whole were offended by existing practices, and investigative resources weren't allocated because no harm was actually being caused. Another answer might be that it was the failure to enforce, itself, that emboldened any violators and put the law-abiding operator at a disadvantage.

Until the last day of the session, the Place bill had a reasonable or better chance of being enacted in some form. Enactment would have profoundly affected the livelihoods of many of those who make their living in our industry. The successful (as it turned out) campaign to take their case to the Legislature, pointed this out to a lot of people, who are this industry's friends, its leaders, and its rivals. Surprisingly, not every LBE operator opposed the Sibley or Place bills. Some favored versions of it, apparently preferring an early compromise to a tough fight with an uncertain end. Amusement Machine Operators of Texas was joined by several associations that represented the customers of its membership. These included the Texas Food Retailing Association, the Texas Bowling Center Association, and two major fraternal organizations: The Elks and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Glen Gardner, the Texas State Adjutant for the latter group, told reporters: "This would destroy many of the VFW posts in Texas" ("Austin American Statesman"). It was clear throughout that the industry was not united, but it was not alone either.

The Texas Legislature will not convene for a regular session again until early 1999. What will happen between then and now? AMOT and its allies have struggled tirelessly to preserve the existing law. Now, no one will gainsay that it is imperative that this law be complied with. Finespun theories aside, the law doesn't have to make sense. It simply has to be what the people want. The current law entrusts to the operator the responsibility of observing a prize limitation. If the prize limitation should be flaunted, then in two years it may be that the popular will is to abolish the amusement game exception, not to preserve it. It may simply be a case of "abuse it and you will lose it." ▲

TECHNICAL
TOPICS

Understanding solenoid driver circuits

A Play Meter Monthly Exclusive

RANDY FROMM

"Randy. What got you started in the amusement game business?"

I've been asked the question countless times in the past 25 years. I ask the same question myself when I meet someone else in the business. It's always interesting to learn how people end up in our industry.

For me, the answer is simple: pinball! In fact, I had a chance to spend some time with a group of bonafide "pinheads" recently at the Wild West Pinball Fest in Phoenix, Ariz. All of the best players were there, including Williams Electronics' Roger Sharpe, George Gomez, and Tom Cahill as well as Alpha Omega's Steve Epstein (formerly of New York's famous Broadway Arcade.)

Boy, I never thought I'd be doing that again! The discussion centered on the solenoid driver circuits, since that's where we find many of the common failures in a pinball machine.

Williams Electronics' WPC System

All of the solenoids in the Williams system are powered by a 50-volt power supply. This is a straightforward, unregulated power supply that consists of just six components. First, a transformer is used to lower the AC line voltage from 120 volts to 50 volts. Following the secondary winding of the power transformer, four diodes are used to rectify the AC, converting it to Direct Current. In earlier designs, a bridge rectifier was used for this function. The WPC95 system has changed to the individual diodes to improve reliability.

By using four discrete diodes instead of a single bridge, the heat generated by the components is spread out and reliability has been greatly improved. Bridge rectifier failure is not unusual in the previous WPC system. To date, I haven't had to replace a single diode in the WPC95 system games.

Following the diodes, a filter capacitor is used to smooth out the pulsating DC output, providing a steady current to the solenoids. This power supply is unregulated. Although it is referred to as the +50 volt power supply, it will actually measure at about +70 volts when you check it at a coil or at the test point on the power/driver PCB. This is because it is unregulated and you're testing it without a load (coils not energized). The output of the supply does drop to around +50 volts DC when loaded.

This +50 volt power supply is distributed to the coils in the game through three, fused power busses. Each buss is fused at 2.5 amps with a slow blow (now referred to as a time-delay) fuse. These fuses are now the new world standard fuse size of 5mm X 20mm. If you haven't already stocked up on these fuses, there's no time like the present to do so.

Don't wait until the supply of fuses provided by Williams runs out. There's nothing more frustrating than not being able to fix something because you don't have the correct value (or sized) fuse.

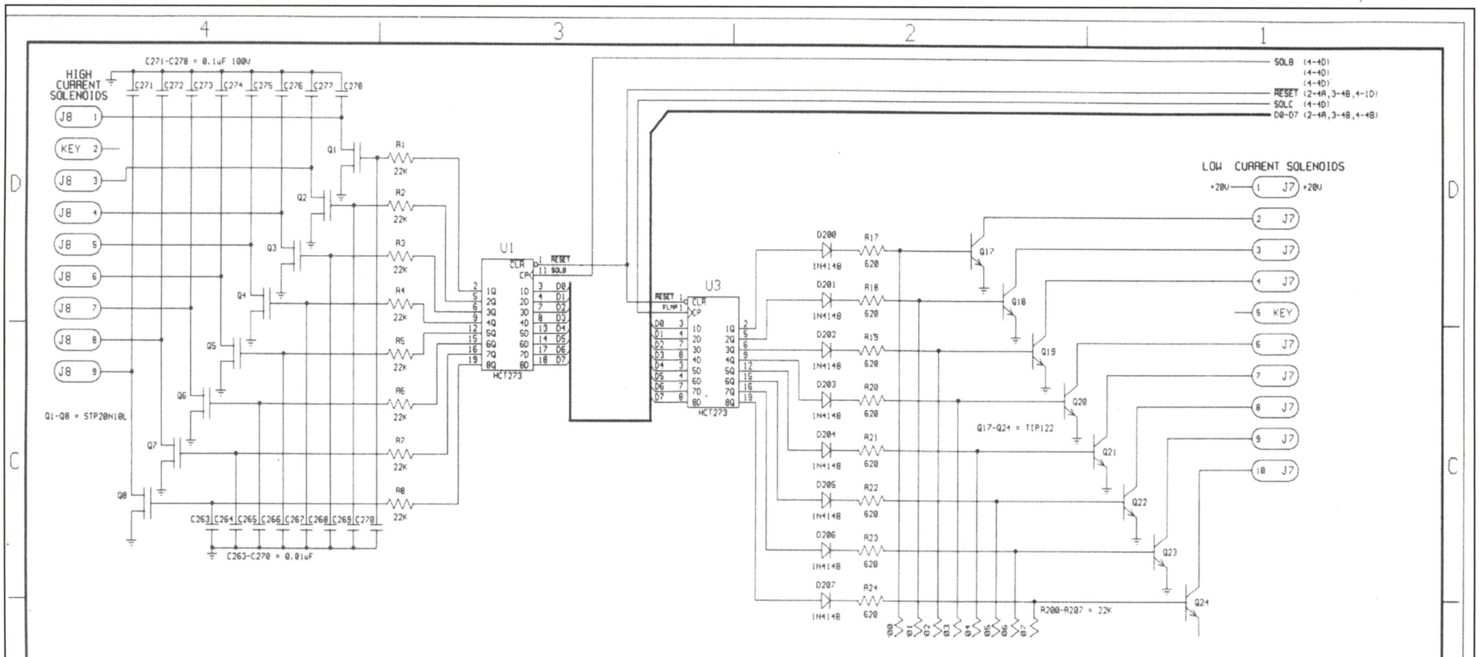
The value of the fuse is critical to proper operation and proper protection of the solenoids. When a coil is energized, it actually draws more than 2.5 amps of current. But the fuse doesn't blow because these are momentary-duty coils. They are energized for only a fraction of a second each time they operate.

However, if the coil remains energized continuously due to a failure in the solenoid driver circuit (see below) the fuse will open before the coil has been damaged by the excessive heat generated by continuous operation. That's the idea, anyway. The fuse is in the circuit to protect the coils if the driver circuit fails.

Solenoid driver circuits

Williams uses three, slightly differing circuits to drive the high-power solenoids, the low-power solenoids and the flashlamps. Flashlamps? Yes, flashlamps. In a pinball machine, the flashlamps are treated as solenoids because they draw a fair amount of electric current and the normal lamp

> ***"I was at the Fest to give a presentation on pinball repair, including a segment on troubleshooting electromechanical pinball!"***



Sega uses FETs to dive the high-power coils and standard bipolar transistors for the low currcent solenoids

driver circuit (called the lamp matrix) cannot power them.

When discussing these circuits, it's best to begin at the output and work our way back since most of the failures are in the output circuit.

The +50 volt output of each of the three power busses is connected to a group of a half-dozen or so coils. No two coils are ever energized simultaneously on the same buss. To do so would blow the fuse.

The power buss is a red wire that connects to one terminal of each of the coils. The wire loops from coil to coil around the playfield in a "daisy-chain." As long as the game is turned on and the power interlock switch on the front door is closed, there is +50 volts DC connected to one side of all the solenoids.

To energize a coil, the return path must be completed. The return path is simply a connection from the non-powered terminal of the coil to ground. This is accomplished by using a transistor to switch the coil to ground. For the flashlamps and the low-power coils, it's a special type of NPN transistor called a "darlington" transistor. A darlington transistor is actually two transistors in a single transistor package.

In a darlington transistor, the emitter of one transistor is connected to the base of a second transistor. The two collectors are tied together. There is also a built-in protection diode connected between the collector and emitter. All of this is housed in a common, TO-220 package. A typical part number is TIP102. A TIP122 is a common replacement.

FYI, the TO-220 package was developed by Texas Instruments. TIP stands for Texas Instruments Package. Many of the transistors we find in a TO-220 package carry part numbers that begin with TIP.

The base of the darlington transistor is driven, through a 1N4004 diode and a 68 ohm resistor, by another transistor. This time, it's a PNP transistor, an MPSD52. Actually, just about any general-purpose PNP transistor will function here. The commonly available 2N5401 or 2N4403 works just fine.

The purpose of the diode is to protect the PNP transistor from destruction in case the TIP102 short circuits collector to base. A collector to base short in the TIP102 will run the +50 volt power supply back into the driving circuitry. The diode blocks this back-flow (not a real electronic term.)

Moving back further still, there is an integrated circuit that drives the entire solenoid driver circuit. It's an octal latch, part number 74LS374. Normally, the output of the 74LS374 is a logic "high." When the computer wants to energize a solenoid, it sends data via the data buss to the 74LS374, toggling the output to a logic "low." (This is known as an "active low" output.) The logic low turns on the PNP transistor, in turn sending the Vcc on a path from the emitter to the collector, through the diode and 68 ohm current limiting resistor to the base of the TIP102 darlington transistor.

The High-Power solenoid driver circuit is almost the same as the Low-Power solenoid driver circuit. Is fact, it is exactly the same save for the addition of two components: a 220 ohm

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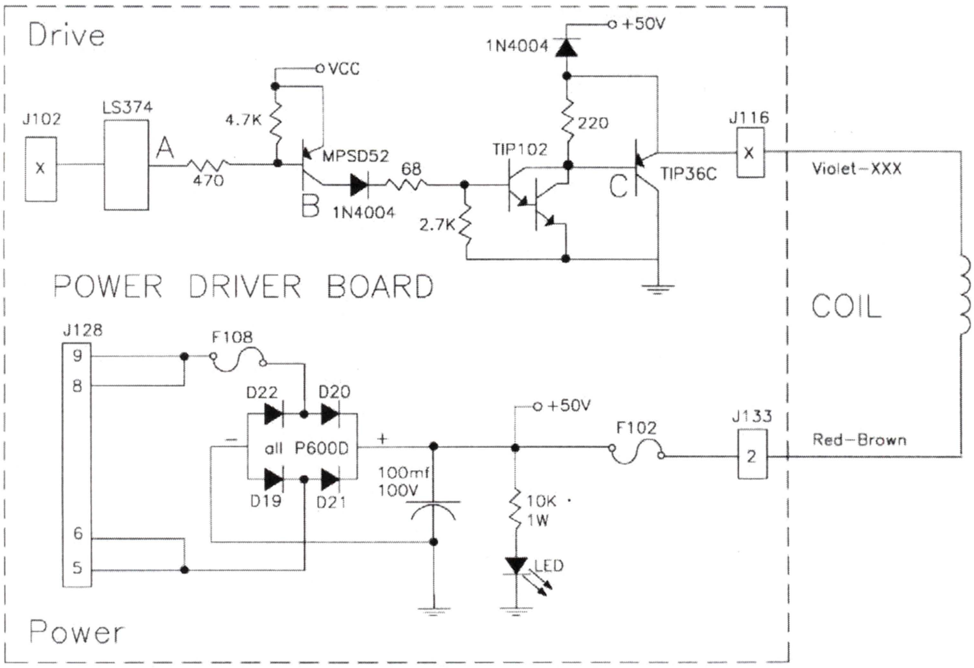
HIGH POWER SOLENOID CIRCUIT



The microprocessor toggles the output of the 74LS374. When point “A” is low, point “B”, the collector of the MPSD52 transistor, is high. A high at point “B” causes point “C”, the collector of the TIP102 transistor and point “D”, the emitter of the TIP36C transistor, to drop low. When point “D” is low, the coil is grounded through the transistor and turns on. The coil shuts off when point “A” toggles high.

resistor and a TIP36C transistor. The TIP36C is a PNP transistor in a TO-218 package. The TO-218 package is somewhat larger than the TO-220 package of the TIP 102. The larger package allows the TO-218 package to drive coils that demand higher current.

Troubleshooting

Troubleshooting the solenoid driver circuit is easy. Most of the time, the driver transistor is shorted. The symptom is easy to diagnose; the coil will be continuously energized or the coil will be burned and/or melted, or (hopefully) the fuse will be blown. It’s easy to determine which transistor is bad. If you have the manual, the solenoids are all listed with their associated driver transistor. The schematic alone will not tell you as this is a system game and solenoid drivers may be assigned to different coils between games.

Not to worry, however. Even without the book, it’s easy to locate bad components in the solenoid driver circuits. To test for bad output transistors, just set your meter to measure resistance, diode test, or continuity beeper. Ground the black meter lead to the ground braid somewhere and, with the power to the game turned off, touch the red meter probe to the metal tabs of the TIP102 transistors that are the solenoid drivers. The metal tab is the collector of the transistor. When the transistor fails, it shorts from collector to emitter. Since all the emitters of the TIP102 transistors are grounded, connecting the meter probe to ground connects your meter to all of the transistors at the same time. Troubleshooting is a simple matter of running your red meter probe across all of the metal tabs. When the meter beeps or shows a low resistance, you’ve found your culprit.

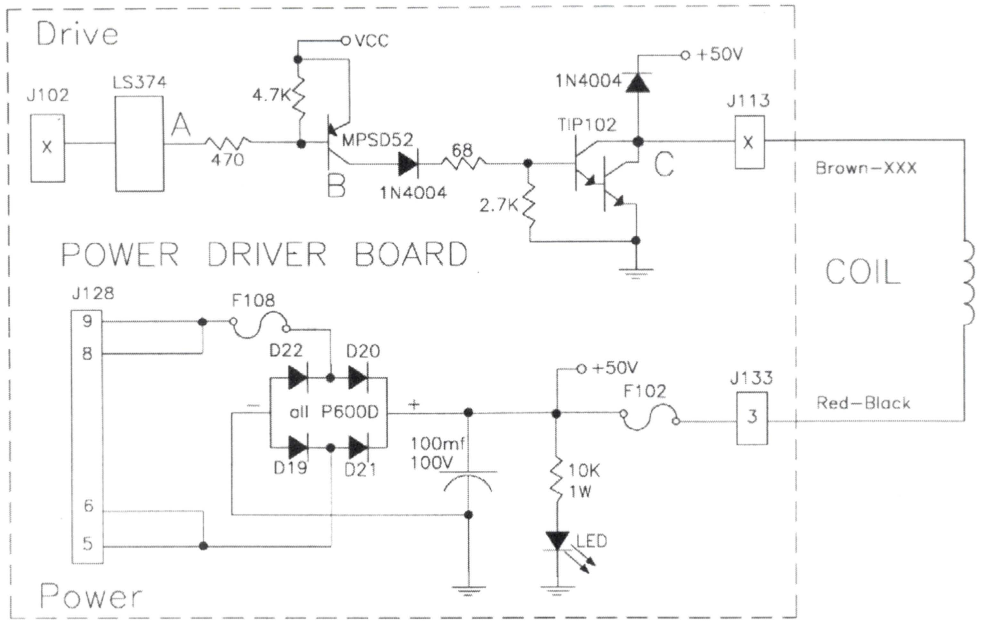
Note that the high power solenoids are driven by PNP transistors. As such, it’s the collectors of the TIP36C transistors that are grounded, not the emitters. In this case, the test is made by grounding the black meter lead as before but using the red meter lead to touch the emitter lead of the TIP36C. This is somewhat more difficult to get to (not much, though) as you must probe the right-hand leg of the transistor instead of the much more convenient metal tab.

If you don’t have a meter or the book (shame on you) you can locate the bad transistor by pulling off the connector (such as J113 or J116) to disconnect the continuously energized solenoid, and looking for a spark when reconnected. The pin that sparks is connected to the shorted transistor. Just note the pin that sparks, pull the board, and follow the trace on the PCB from the pin to the bad transistor. Naturally, the power has to be on for this test.

FET drivers

While Williams Electronics uses conventional bipolar transistors to drive the coils, Sega (and the now defunct Gottlieb’s System 3 games) use devices known as “power MOSFETs.” The MOSFET (Metal Oxide Semiconductor, Field Effect Transistor) looks

LOW POWER SOLENOID CIRCUIT


Drive
J102
X
LS374
A
470
VCC
4.7K
MPSD52
B
1N4004
68
2.7K
1N4004
+50V
TIP102
C
J113
X
Brown–XXX
COIL
POWER DRIVER BOARD
J128
9
8
6
5
F108
D22
D20
all P600D
D19
D21
−
+
100mf
100V
+50V
F102
J133
3
Red–Black
10K
1W
LED
Power

The microprocessor toggles the output of the 74LS374. When point "A" is low, point "B", the collector of the MPSD52 transistor, is high. A high at point "B" turns on the TIP102 transistor and causes point "C" to drop low. When point "C" is low the coil is grounded through the transistor and turns on. The coil shuts off when point "A" toggles high.

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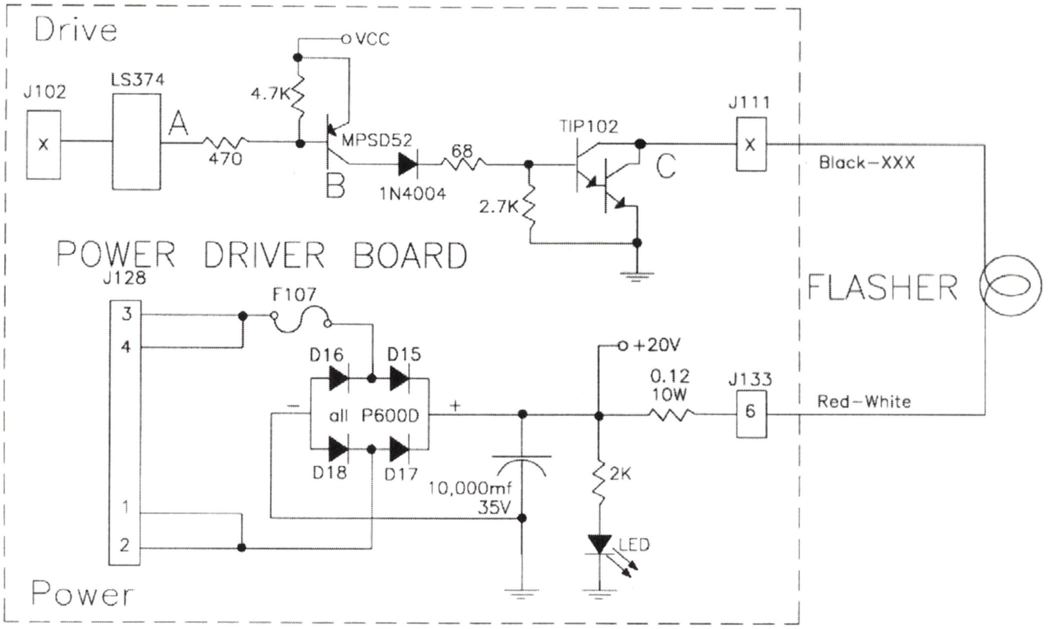
FLASHLAMP CIRCUIT



The microprocessor toggles the output of the 74LS374. When point "A" is low, point "B" the collector of the MPSD52 transistor, is high. Once point "B" is high, point "C" the collector of the TIP102 transistor is low. When point "C" is low, the flashlamp is grounded through the transistor and turns on. When point "A" toggles high, the current shuts off.

exactly the same as a regular coil driver transistor. It comes in the same TO-220 package as the TIP122 that is familiar to just about everyone that works on pinball machines.

But this is where the similarity ends. In fact, even the names of the three component leads are different. In the transistor, the three component leads are called the emitter, collector, and base. In the FET they are the source, drain, and gate.

Although the names are different, their functions are much the same. For example, the major current flow through a transistor is between the emitter and the collector. It's called the "collector current." The emitter/collector connection is used to control the current through the solenoids. In the MOSFET, the same job is handled by the source and the drain. To energize a coil, the FET closes the source/drain connection, completing the circuit. The main current flow in a FET is called the drain current.

The remaining component lead is the controlling element of the device. In the transistor, the base lead controls the flow of current between the emitter and collector. A small voltage on the base will turn the transistor on. In the MOSFET, the controlling element is called the gate. Sega and Gottlieb use MOSFETs that are controlled by standard logic levels (about 5 volts) on the gate. Instead of using a system of integrated circuit latches, pre-driver transistors, and driver transistors, the MOSFETs are driven directly by data latches (multiple flip-flops) on the driver board. This reduces the number of components on the circuit board and simplifies troubleshooting.

For Sega, the MOSFETs used in the solenoid driver circuits are type 0N10L. Gottlieb used 12N10L. The first pair of numbers refers to the current rating. In this case, for Sega it's rated at a maximum drain current of 20 amps. This is more than enough for any coil with plenty of headroom. The N indicates an "N channel" FET. Some FETs are of opposite polarity. These are known as "P channel" FETs. The final 2 digits indicate the voltage rating. The 20N10L is a 100 volt MOSFET. The L suffix indicates that a "logic" level is used on the gate to turn the FET on.

Shorted FETs test just like regular transistors. Troubleshooting is the same as well. Just ground your black meter lead and touch the metal tabs or center legs of the transistors.

Both Williams and Sega Pinball have produced truly excellent service and technical manuals and schematic diagrams. They are the technician's best friend. Thanks to them for making our job so much easier.

As usual, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at 1944 Falmouth Drive, El Cajon, CA 92020-2827; (619)593-6131; fax (619)593-6132; e-mail (randy@randyfromm.com) or the best damned Web site in the industry (http://randyfromm.com).

See you at the Arcade School! ▲

BATTLE
TECH

How to build a tournament
REMOTE CONTROL
box for *San Francisco Rush*

LARRY MUNDAY

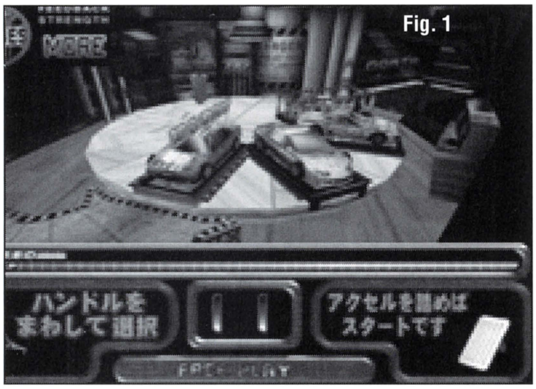


Fig. 1

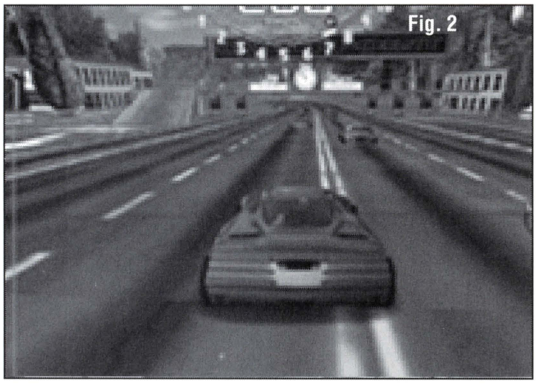


Fig. 2

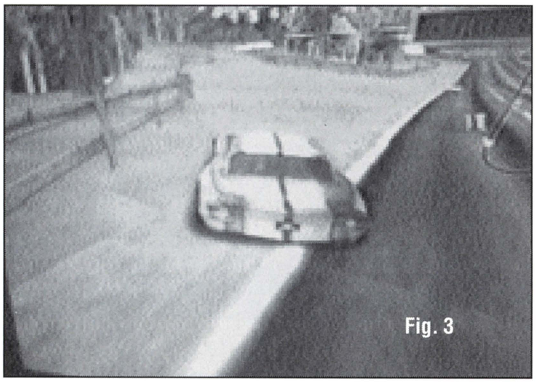


Fig. 3

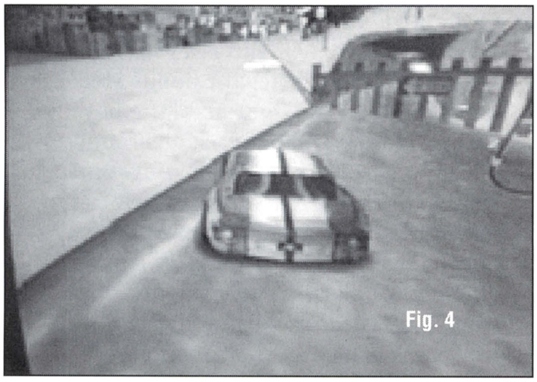


Fig. 4

In this edition of "Battle Tech," we will explore three aspects of *San Francisco Rush Extreme Racing* by Atari Games.

1. **New eprom, version 1.12:** This past April Atari made available to your distributor a new eprom you may not know about. This is because it is not an automatic update, but an optional version. Your distributor has been told that the games coming off the production line will still use the 1.06 version but to make available version 1.12 to "only the operators who request the update."

In order to support the unique needs of a wide range of locations, this new update was produced to provide more flexibility in setting the game difficulty. Now you can tailor each track independently of each other with three unique adjustments.

The checkpoint bonus time is adjustable from A-H. This setting adjusts how much is awarded at each checkpoint and thus determines how easy it is to continue driving around the track. The number of laps on each track is adjustable from two to five. Atari recommends using two laps while the game is new. If you have been running the 1.06 version for awhile, you might upset some players who have become accustomed to getting three laps on tracks 2 and 3. The last adjustment is the difficulty of the drones. This setting determines how aggressive the drones are.

2. How to build a tournament remote control box: One of the neatest features of the tournament menu screen (fig. A) is not only the ability to put limitations on just about every aspect of the game but some of the perimeters can be controlled remotely, i.e. which track, and join in. Unfortunately there is no place you can call to order a control box and there is nothing in the manual on how to build one. Have no fear, Battle Tech is here. Fig. B shows a schematic/pictorial of the remote box and all parts are readily on hand at any Radio Shack or other parts store. Parts include a project box, four-position switch, momentary switch, 12vdc LED, male and female Molex connectors plus pins, and assorted wiring. The assembly is pretty straightforward. Just follow the picture. One little note: the Molex connector provides a way for the box to be removed from the wire harness when not in use.

3. Secrets revealed. The following can be input at the "select your track" screen:

a.) Hold down the "reverse" button while selecting your track to play solo.This blocks others from joining in and also eliminates the "waiting for others to join" timer.

- *The following are input at the "select your car" screen:*

a.) Hold down the "view 1" button to select the alternate cars. (This makes a total of eight. Are there more?)

b.) Hold down the "music" button and press the "view 2" button to turn the drone cars on/off (fig. 1).

c.) Hold down the "music" button and press the "view 3" button to select the amount of tactile feedback the steering wheel produces (fig. 1).

- *The following are shortcuts/bonus areas on the "beginner track:"*

a.) After crossing the Golden Gate bridge at the start there is a ramp on your left (fig. 2).

b.) The fence on your left after the Presidio tunnel, but before the checkpoint, has a breakaway section. Drive through it and you will end up on a dirt

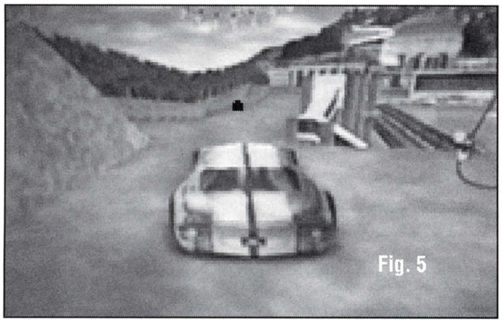


Fig. 5

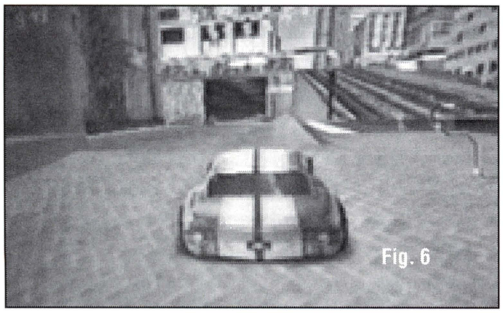


Fig. 6

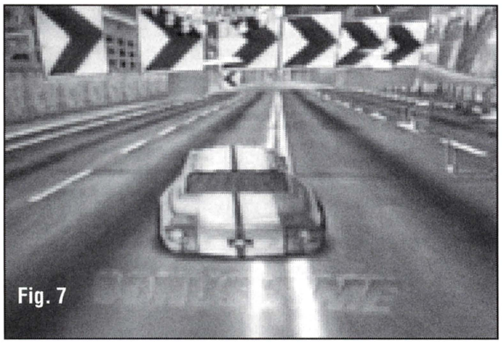


Fig. 7

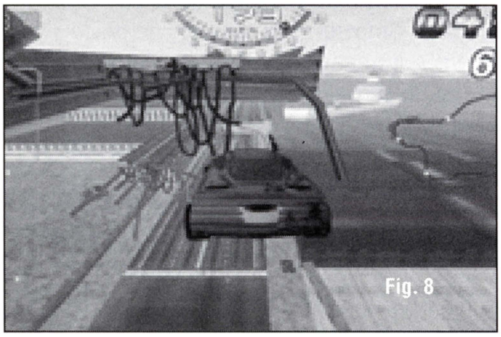


Fig. 8

road that rejoins the main track just after the Haight-Ashbury section (fig. 3).

c.) Just after the Haight-Ashbury section you can follow a small road down and to the left to a blocked culvert. Veer left onto the dirt just before the culvert and rejoin the main track before the big hill (fig. 4).

d.) Just even with the finish line there is a small tunnel in the wall on the left side. Go through and it will return you to the main track near the Presidio tunnel. When heading downhill to the finish line you can veer left before the last jump onto a ledge with five trees on it and it will work like a ramp and you can jump straight at the tunnel to enter it at full speed (fig. 5).

• *The following are shortcuts/bonus areas on the "advanced track:"*

a.) As you head uphill after the first big left hand turn there is a tunnel entrance in the buildings on the left. This tunnel goes under the road and emerges out of the buildings on the right side of the road at the top of the last jump (fig. 6).

b.) Drive through the first set of orange cones at the "entrance ramp" and veer left through the support columns before the "DANGER!" sign to find a jump ramp. Although you are airborne for a long distance this route is much shorter and faster (fig. 7).

c.) For yet a still faster route, drive around the ramp to the left and drive on dirt back to the main track.

d.) Drive through the orange cones and jump off the broken piece of the Bay Bridge (fig. 8). If you jump towards the left you can land on the other side of the bridge and it will end in a huge half pipe with loops at both ends. You can get bonus time there by running into the white boxes with the Atari logo on them at the top of the loops.

e.) There is also a little room in the side of the half pipe wall directly between the two loops. There is a man (artist Rob Adams) holding a sign inside of the room (fig. 9). This area is for exploration only and is definitely not a shortcut. You can return to the track by hitting the "abort" button. You can keep looping and build up a huge amount of bonus time in the near loop. Just make sure you hit at an angle instead of nose first at the bottom of the loop or you will explode and be returned to the main track. Plus you will want to use view 1 or 2 when doing the loop. That way it is easier to line up on the time flags.

f.) Instead of jumping off the Bay Bridge, slow to almost a complete stop and fall off the edge.There is another section of bridge below that you will drop onto. If you follow it all the way back it will dead end into a wall. There is another man (artist Spencer Lindsay) with a sign there (fig. 10).

g.) You can also jump into the bay at the point where the Bay Bridge splits off from the main track. Look at the beginning of the center divider between the Bay Bridge and the "exit ramp" (right where the cones stop). There is a lowered portion that you can use as a jump ramp. Go to the end of the Bay Bridge and turn around. Proceed back at about 90 mph, veer left across the low portion of the divider, and jump over the wall into the bay (fig. 11). This is a glitch and definitely not a shortcut or bonus area. You will fall to "the bottom of the bay" and the screen will be black all around you. You can still see the buildings and ships in the background above. You can drive around but your speed will not go above 39 mph. The arrows will appear attempting to lead you back to the main track, but as far as I can tell, the only way out is to hit the "abort" button.

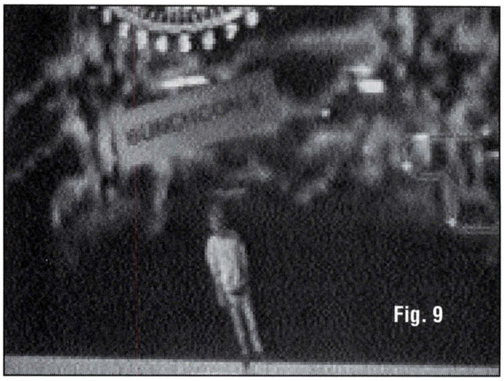


Fig. 9

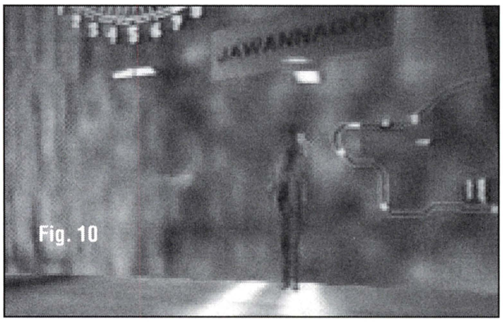


Fig. 10

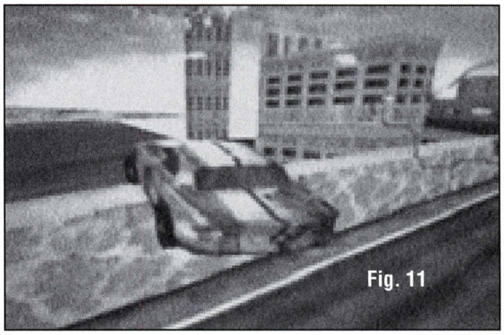


Fig. 11

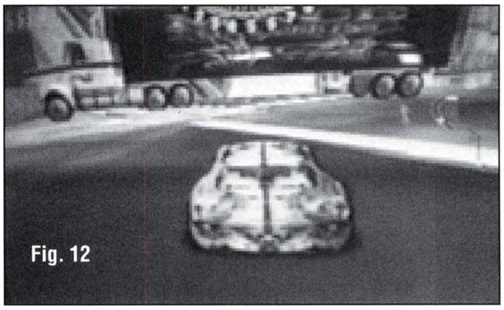


Fig. 12

In order to support the unique needs of a wide range of locations, this new update was produced to provide more flexibility in setting the game difficulty.

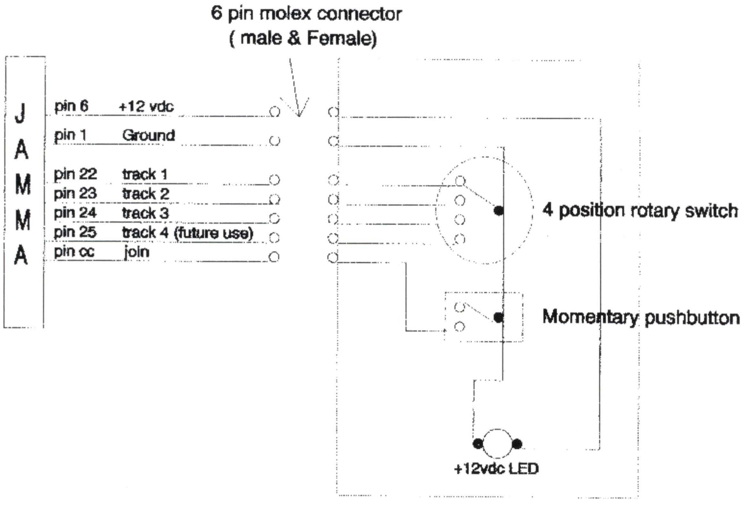
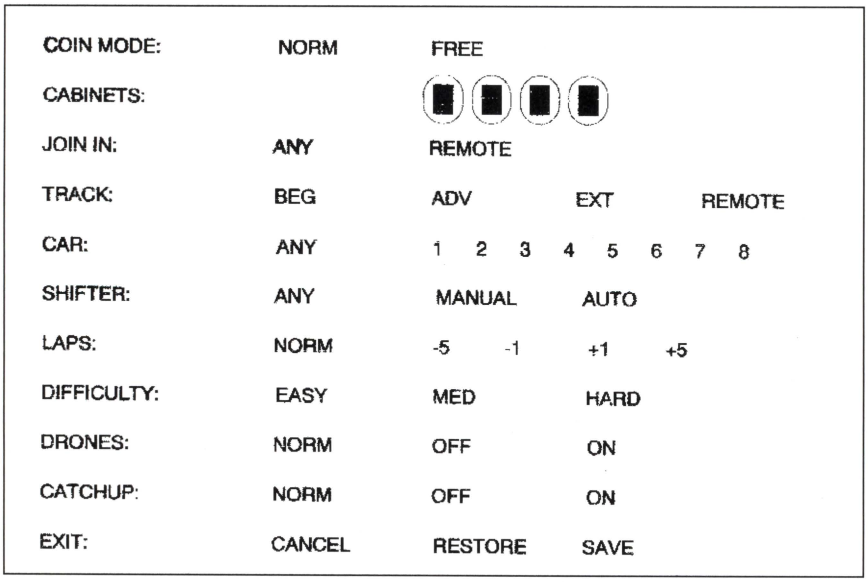

6 pin molex connector
(male & Female)
J
A
M
M
A
pin 6 +12 vdc
pin 1 Ground
pin 22 track 1
pin 23 track 2
pin 24 track 3
pin 25 track 4 (future use)
pin cc join
4 position rotary switch
Momentary pushbutton
+12vdc LED

FIG. B



COIN MODE:	NORM	FREE		
CABINETS:		■ ■ ■ ■		
JOIN IN:	ANY	REMOTE		
TRACK:	BEG	ADV	EXT	REMOTE
CAR:	ANY	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8		
SHIFTER:	ANY	MANUAL	AUTO	
LAPS:	NORM	-5 -1	+1	+5
DIFFICULTY:	EASY	MED	HARD	
DRONES:	NORM	OFF	ON	
CATCHUP:	NORM	OFF	ON	
EXIT:	CANCEL	RESTORE	SAVE	

FIG. A

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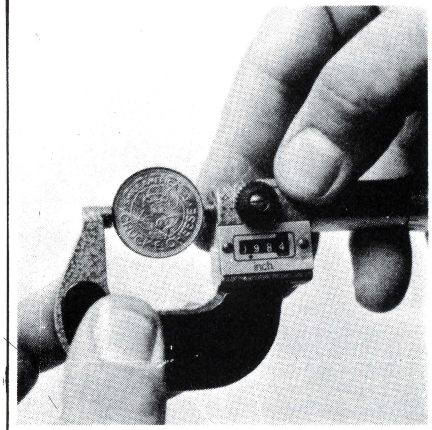

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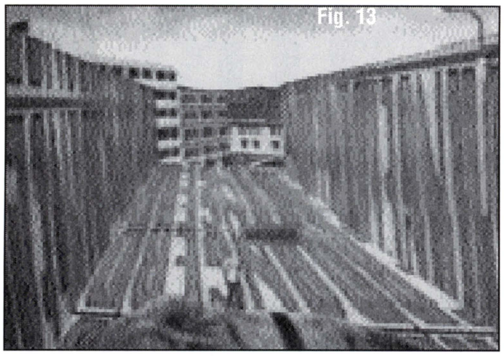

Fig. 13

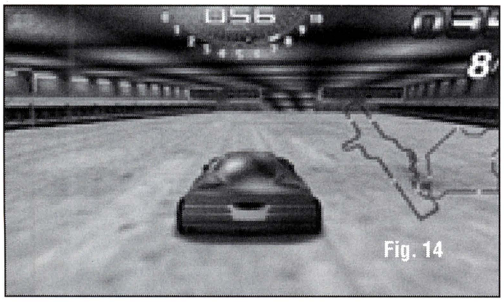

Fig. 14

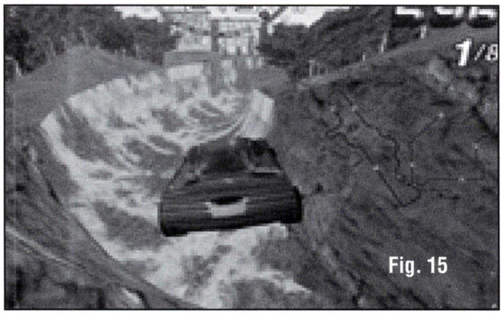

Fig. 15

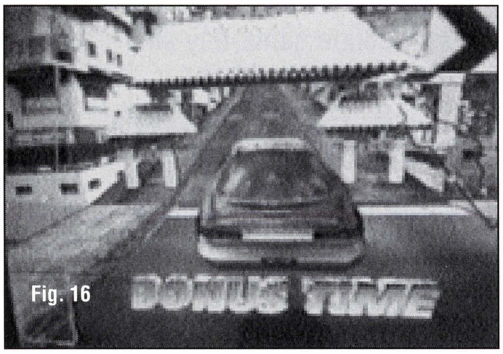

Fig. 16

h.) Drive under the semi-trailer to hit a jump ramp which will put you on top of the buildings (fig. 12). Hit this ramp at 85 mph and punch the gas again while in the air to level out. Continue jumping the buildings and you will end up landing back on the track or in the field on the right side of the wall which empties back out onto the starting straightaway.

i.) Just past the semi-trailer turn, proceed down the hill and drive straight into the fountain in the plaza on your left. Hit it around 95-100 mph and it will launch you up and into the side of the building. There is a tunnel straight through the building that is hidden by the glass panels. Its walls are covered with the "DANGER!" signs. There is another little figure (artist Mike Prittie) in the middle of the tunnel holding a sign (fig. 13). It is possible to stop in the building tunnel by slamming on the brakes and/or pressing the "reverse" button. You will be returned to the course as if you hit the "abort" button after a short amount of time. When coming out of this tunnel you will fall and land just short of the second fountain on the other side of the building.

j.) Just past the building with the tunnel through it you can take a sharp left turn for an alternate route between the buildings.

- *The following are shortcuts/bonus areas on the "extreme track:"*

a.) Very shortly after the start, where the road veers to the left, there is a ramp in the buildings on the right that leads into a parking garage shortcut (fig. 14). It contains a few very sharp turns; be sure to watch your head on the way out.

b.) At the first right hairpin turn after the jump you will see a red and white tower and small white buildings on your left. Head between or around the buildings and you will enter a canyon half pipe with rock obstructions on your right and left (fig.15).

c.) Drive straight through the cones in front of Chinatown instead of turning right and you can drive the hills all the way up (fig.16). At the last jump, slow to about 100 mph, hit the brakes, and head right after landing. You will then jump down over Lombard street and rejoin the main track (fig. 17).

d.) After you jump again and are forced to turn right at the barricades, you will notice a couple of trees on a small grassy area guarding a tunnel entrance in between the buildings on your left. In fig. 17 you will notice a square box pointing out the entrance. You can drive straight through the trees and into the tunnel. The tunnel will go straight and then take a sharp turn to the right, swerve left and right a few times and empty out in front of the building with the cascading staircase.

Here is an extremely fast way to navigate the tunnel: stay on the left side as you enter the tunnel and at the right hand turn continue driving straight up the left wall and do a clockwise barrel roll onto the ceiling and down the right hand wall! Now at the next bend in the tunnel drive straight up the right hand wall and perform a counter-clockwise barrel roll. You must slow down and make a hard left when exiting the tunnel (less than 80 mph). You can enter this tunnel from both ends.

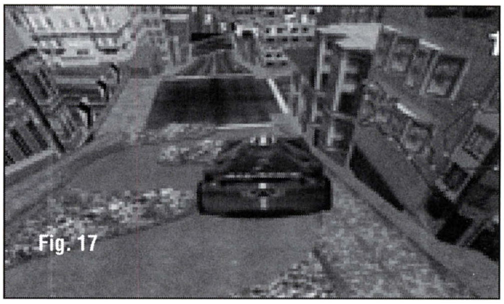

Fig. 17

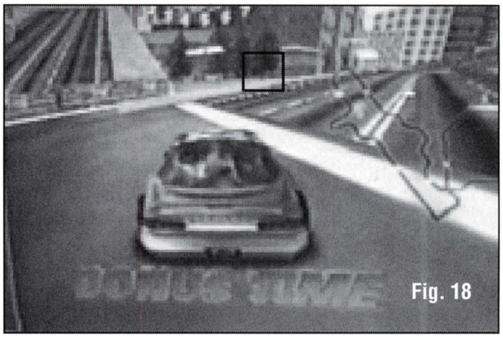

Fig. 18

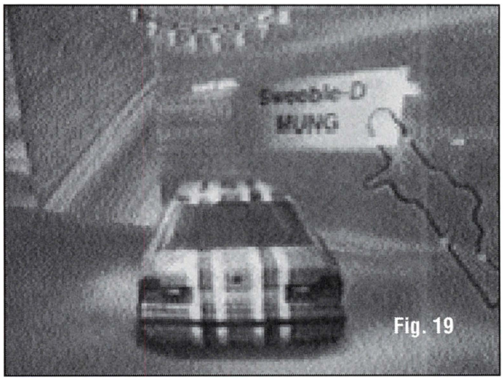

Fig. 19

e.) Instead of going through Chinatown follow the track through the right uphill and left uphill turns. At the top of the next hill there is a building on the right corner and a fence with a gap in it just behind the building. If you go through the gap in the fence and down the small hill (drive slowly) there is a small tunnel to the left which leads to a secret room that is all sky-textured. There is a sign on the wall next to the entrance (fig. 9). During testing, this was the sewer entrance. But it was soon pointed out (by me for one) that if the Chinatown shortcut was taken, there would be no way to also take the sewer shortcut. So, they moved it to where it is now. ▲

Camel 8-Ball WINNERS sweep singles finals

The exciting singles action at the Camel 8-Ball Classic ended with William Morton of Ft. Washington, Md., and Tammy Cox of East Peoria, Ill., sweeping the final matches in under one hour to become the 1997 champions.

Morton, a skill level seven, faced Harold Applebaum, a skill level five from Winnepeg, Canada. Cox, a skill level five who has played with the American Poolplayers Association since it began in her area in the 1980s, was challenged by Patty Archuletta, a skill level four from Snellville, Ga.

Morton's $15,000 prize package consists of a $1,200 gold championship ring with diamonds; $1,200 Meucci commemorative championship cue; $120 Meucci double leather cue case; $1,700 35-inch JVC television with stand; $470 JVC VCR; $1,300 JVC camcorder: $730 JVC compact component system: $220 Nikon camera; $276 Sony PlayStation game package; $110 leather bag; $75 singles championship jacket; and $7,500 in cash. Applebaum earned a $10,000 prize package including a $1,000 commemorative Wittnauer watch.

Cox's $9,000 championship prize package consists of a $1,000 gold championship ring; $1,200 Meucci commemorative championship cue; $120 Meucci double leather cue case; $1,100 JVC 32-inch television; $470 JVC VCR; $300 JVC mini stereo system; $120 Nikon camera; $110 leather bag; $75 commemorative event jacket; and $4,505 in cash. Archuletta earned a $5,000 package including an $800 commemorative Wittnauer watch.

Tying for third in the Men's Division were Kelvin Craig of Middletown, Del., and David Wheeler from Hamilton, N.J. Both took home $6,000 prize packages. In the Ladies Division, Patricia Spurgeon of Falls Church, Va., and Angela Baker of Effingham, Ill., came away with third place honors and $3,500 prize packages.

Any current APA member participating on an active 8-Ball team can qualify for the Camel 8-Ball Classic as long as a minimum of 10 weekly scores are on record. Winners at the local level advance to the regional level, and winners at that level receive airfare and lodging courtesy of APA to move on to St. Louis and the finals.

At the national level over $200,000 is awarded in cash and prizes. In 1998, the Camel 8-Ball Classic will move to Las Vegas. For more information about APA, call (800)372-2536. ▲

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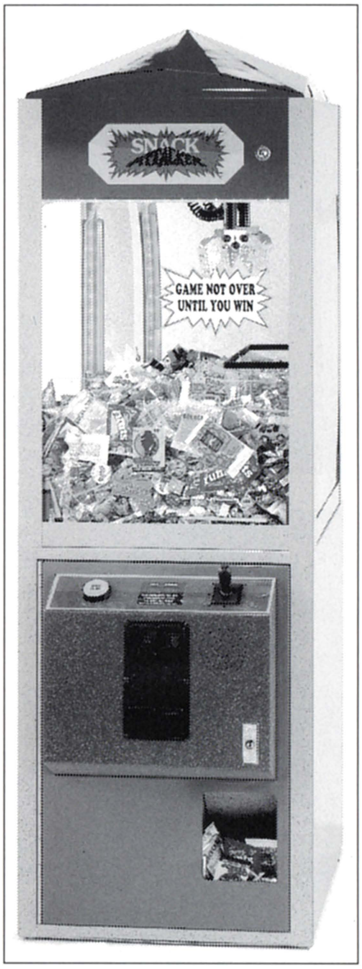

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Winners move on in VALLEY GOLD TOUR

TOP: Chuck Cox won first place at the local event in Wamac, Ill.

BOTTOM: Kim Bawalski (r) took first place over Nancy Bandeher in Schaumberg, Ill.

All roads lead to Minneapolis, or at least it must have seemed that way for darters across the country competing in local qualifying tournaments in the new three-tiered Valley Gold tour. Operators across the country are sponsoring local events in which winners move on to regional tour stops and then to Minneapolis this month for the North American Championships.

Here's how the latest contingent of winners took that first step:

Illinois

In a pair of follow-up events, K Amusements of Schaumberg qualified six darters at the local Dakota's Bar & Grill and Williams Enterprises of Centralia brought in two more at Jono's Place in Wamac. The roster of winners included: Jim Wright, Ted Ito, Ken Tripp, Scott Buckholtz, Jodi Karwath, Kim Bawalski, Nancy Bandeher, Chuck Cox, and Linda Carpenter.

Wyoming

Twenty-four darters met at the Country Inn in Douglas in a qualifier sponsored by Juke Box Jack of Evansville. The men's first bracket winner was Larry Evans, who had come to Douglas for another tournament and stayed to win the Valley Gold event. The second male victor was Jim Ousley, and the winner in the women's category was Karen Burton.

Minnesota

In a small but successful qualifier, three more darters progressed in competition hosted by Hazelwood Corp. of Aitken. The event was held at Tropical Nights in Brainerd, and the winners were Russ Burgoyne, Buck Weidell, and Tracy Codahl.

These operator-sponsored local events sent darters on to Team USA and Go for the Gold events at one of the five regional qualifiers. The finals will be held in Minneapolis, July 18-20. The top 32 players from each of the regionals qualify for the finals. For more information, contact the Valley Gold tour committee, (888)868-7465. ▲

Incredible Technologies holds Tax Attack tourney

The results are in on Incredible Technologies' national Tax Attack contest, held during the spring tax season on the company's *Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee 3D Golf.* The event was linked via the company's International Tournament System (ITS), which pits players in locations across the country against one another.

Here's a look at the final results:

National: 1st–Ryan Bourgeois of Houston, Texas ($2,500); 2nd–Steven Sobe of Mt. Airy, N.C. ($2,000); 3rd–Tom Payne of Mt. Airy, N.C. ($1,500).

Illinois Division: 1st–Michael Nisavic of Bridgeview, Ill. ($500); 2nd–Gery T. Martin of Chicago Ridge, Ill. ($400); 3rd–Tom Vithoulkas of Countryside, Ill. ($300).

Central Division: 1st–Mike Bouchey of Lakeville, Minn.; 2nd–Greg Schuster of Hazelwood, Mo.; 3rd–M. Arriaga of Houston, Texas.

Nebraska Division: 1st–Mark Lyall of Meadow Grove, Neb.; 2nd–Curt Bennet of Omaha, Neb.; 3rd–Rod Bennet of Omaha, Neb.

Northeast Divsion: 1st–Linda Openshaw of Huntington Valley, Pa.; 2nd–M. Poeppelman of Parma Heights, Ohio; 3rd–F. Spoto of South Euclid, Ohio.

Southwest Division: 1st–Randy Rogers of Mt. Airy, N.C.; 2nd–W.J. Bowman of Mt.Airy, N.C.; 3rd–Donovan Wright of Mt. Airy, N.C.

Western Division: 1st–David Lockyer of Lewiston, Idaho; 2nd–Gary X of Bellevue, Wash.; 3rd–Mike Nilan of Seattle, Wash. ▲

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Women's Second Chance Singles champion Julie Sullivan with Arachnid's Dave Schultz.

Mixed Triples winners Harry Barth, Petra Rice, and Dieter Joob with Arachnid's Sam Zammuto.

Doubles Cricket first place finishers Marty Schilling and Raymond Carver with Arachnid's Sam Zammuto.

Arachnid Inc. sponsored its 12th World Championship May 23-26 at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare using 205 *Galaxy English Mark Darts* games. The finals were playoffs between the best darters who all qualified at a BullShooter regional or through their local dart league or operator.

Players came from all over the world, including several foreign countries, in search of spirited competition and more than $100,000 in prize money and awards. Twelve main events were played with over 6,000 entries during the four-day tournament.

A $15,000 warm-up competition got the event started on Friday pitting competitors who qualified during the regular season by winning a Top Gun tournament at their local pub against one another. In the Men's event, Larry Schramm of Jacksonville, Fla., defeated Roger Carter of Warner Robins, Ga., and took home the $5,000 first prize. The Women's bracket saw Kathy Maloney of Concord Twp., Ohio, beating out last year's winner Kathy Karpowich of Freeland, Pa.

While pro classified players were not allowed to compete in any of the open or mixed events, there were four pro exclusive contests. Larry Butler of Fairborn, Ohio, won the most prestigious event, the Pro Singles 501 DI/DO. Top Pro Doubles honors were won by John Kuczynski of Zion Grove, Pa., and Darin Young of White Haven, Pa. The new Pro Mixed Cricket was won by Thomas Johnson of Largo, Fla., and Maloney. Peter Iverson and John Ferrell, both of the United Kingdom, took first in the Pro Cricket Doubles.

On Saturday an international parade of teams holding their respective country flags were introduced and presented medalions by Arachnid president Michael Tillery, vice president of European operations Einar Askvig, vice president of marketing Sam Zammuto, vice president of sales Marcio Bonilla, and American darts liga supervisor Pascal Molinario. A round robin competition took place with 10 countries competing for the International Cup. They included: Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Holland, Slovenia, Mexico, Canada, Belgium, and the United States. The event ended with the German team defeating Austria to win the cup for the second year in a row.

At the end of tournament play, dazzling gold ruby rings were presented to this year's Most Valuable Players in both male and female categories. The two MVPs—Maloney and Jerry Driskill of Wintergarden, Fla.,—were selected for their outstanding performance in the main events. The conclusion of the competition also ushered in a party atmosphere with dances held in the hotel ballroom on both Saturday and Sunday nights.

Throughout the finals, three fun events were also available for the players. They included Touchdown Darts, Quick Draw, and Chuck-A-Luck Darts. Many prizes were given out including electronic dart games, Shark Dart games, stuffed toys, cash, and even a full-sized *English Mark Darts Oak* game! The BullShooter XIII Tour will start again this fall featuring 16 qualifying regionals, state tournaments, and international events such as the European BullShooter.

Here's a look at the full results from this year's BullShooter finals:

Men's Doubles: 1st–Steve Lebon and Paul Vervinckt, both of Belgium, ($2,000); 2nd–Phillip Lueck of N. Freedom, Wis., and Tori Gould of Janesville, Wis., ($1,000); 3rd–Ricky Lowe and Mark Raymer, both of Indianapolis, Ind., ($650).

Pro Men's Doubles: 1st–John Kuczynski of Zion Grove, Pa., and Darin Young of White Haven, Pa., ($3,000); 2nd–Brad Wethington of Dayton, Ohio, and Scott Buckley of Springfield, Ohio, ($1,400); 3rd–Thomas Brooks of Greenwood, Ind., and Bernard Roney of Granger, Ind, ($900).

Women's Doubles: 1st–Connie Sroka of Emmaus, Pa., and Kathy Karpowich of Freeland, Pa., ($2,000); 2nd–Ana Pujal and Merce Torrents, both of Spain, ($1,000); 3rd–Mary McGrath of Sprinfield, Ill., and Ellen Rice of Freeport, Ill., ($650).

Mixed Doubles Cricket: 1st-Kathy Maloney of Concord Twp., Ohio, and Henry Kline of New Port Richey, Fla., ($2,000); 2nd–Theresa Sullivan of Clermont, Fla., and Jerry Driskill of Wintergarden, Fla., ($1,000); 3rd–Agustin Miranda and Merce Torrents, both of Spain, ($650).

Women's Singles: 1st–Kathy Maloney of Concord Twp, Ohio, ($2,100); 2nd–Merce Prats of Spain, ($1,100); 3rd–Kathy Karpowich of Freeland, Pa., ($750).

Open Singles: 1st–Jerry Driskill of Wintergarden, Fla., ($2,100); 2nd–Don Wirth of Pittsburgh, Pa., ($1,100); 3rd–Juan Robles of Spain, ($750).

Mixed Triples: 1st–Harry Barth, Dieter Joob, and Petra Rice, all of Germany, ($3,000); 2nd–Phillip Lueck of N. Freedom, Wis.; Tori Gould of Janesville, Wis.; and Pam Dirschler; ($1,500); 3rd–Antonio Munoz, Toni Diaz, and Anna Pujol, all of Spain, ($900).

Pro Mixed Cricket: 1st–Thomas Johnson of Largo, Fla., and Kathy Maloney of Concord, Ohio, ($2,200); 2nd–Julie Sullivan of Clifton, N.J., and Michael Abboud of Conyngham, Pa., ($1,200); 3rd–Kathy Karpowich of Freeland, Pa., and Jason Lucas of Tremont, Pa., ($600).

Pro Singles: 1st–Larry Butler of Fairborn, Ohio, ($2,500); 2nd–Peter Evison of England, ($1,200); 3rd–John Part of Canada, ($600).

Open Doubles Cricket: 1st–Raymong Carver of Baltimore, Md., and Marty Schilling of Laniel, Md., ($2,000); 2nd–Dayton Strawbridge of Chicago, Ill., and Robert Bockrath of Dayton, Ohio, ($1,000); 3rd–Tori Gould of Janesville, Wis., and Phillip Lueck of N. Freedom, Wis, ($650).

Pro Cricket Doubles: 1st– Peter Iverson and John Ferrell, both of England, ($3,000); 2nd–Jerry Driskill of Wintergarden, Fla., and John Thomas of Winter Springs, Fla., ($1,400); 3rd–Richard Dement of Beloit, Wis., and Scott Kirchner of Janesville, Wis., ($900).

Women's Second Chance: 1st–Julie Sullivan of Clifton, N.J., ($1,000); 2nd–Heike Schaller of Germany, ($800); 3rd–Dawn Hamlin of Hodgekins, Ill., ($600).

Men's Top Gun: 1st–Larry Schramm of Jacksonville, Fla., ($5,000); 2nd–Roger Carter of Warner Robins, Ga., ($2,000); 3rd–Todd Kurtz of Watertown, Wis., ($1,000).

Women's Top Gun: 1st–Kathy Maloney of Concord Twp., Ohio, ($2,000); Kathy Karpowich of Freeland, Pa., ($1,000); 3rd–Irene Madina of Corpus Christi, Texas, ($600).

Miss BullShooter Competition: 1st–Chris Carlson of Bristol, N.H., ($500); Wendy Crotts of Tampa, Fla., ($250); 3rd–Amy Logsdon of Indianapolis, Ind., ($100). ▲

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Pro Mixed Cricket champions Tom Johnson and Kathy Maloney with Brad Boe of Arachnid.

WOMEN'S DOUBLES CHAMPIONS
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TWO THOUSAND AND 00/100

Brad Boe of Arachnid congratulates Women's Doubles winners Kathy Karpowich and Connie Sroka.

Pro Singles champion Larry Butler with Arachnid's Sam Zammuto.

WHAT'S NEW

THE LOST WORLD
SEGA

The Lost World: Jurassic Park

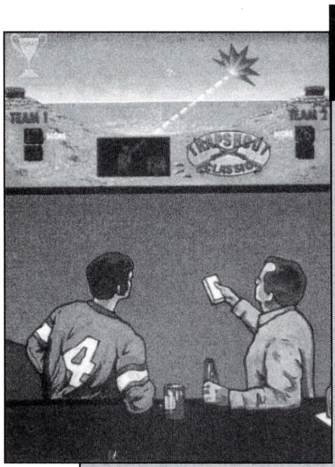
Following on the heels of its hit pinball *Jurassic Park*, Sega Pinball presents the movie-themed sequel, *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, which is banking on the release earlier this summer of the hit sequel motion picture from Steven Spielberg.

The game has been designed to accommodate both the experienced pinball player as well as the average or infrequent player. In addition to its standard attractions, the company also offers an optional 3-D backglass.

Features include: a single memory drop target, a magnetic trap that can be energized by hitting the three loop shots, a Snagger device that locks the pinball for exciting multiball play, an EGG scoop to hatch the baby T-Rex, custom speech by motion picture stars Jeff Goldblum and John Williams, and Site B—where players can battle the Raptors, fight Mommy in the mobile lag, and escape from the Lost World alive.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Sega Pinball, 1990 Janice Ave., Melrose Park, IL 60160; (708)345-7700; fax (708)345-7718.

Trap Shoot Classic



Creative Electronics and Software (CES) presents the newest in its line of classic interactive wall-mount video sports game, *Trap Shoot Classic*, which offers players the feel of a trap shoot competition.

The game combines stunning dot matrix graphics with over 50 motion lamps to simulate the challenge of competition, and the game requires no floor space with a wall-mount cash box, hand-held wireless remote control with a range of up to 20 feet, and a one-year warranty.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact CES, 136 Forest Ave., Lake Zurich, IL 60047; (847)695-0023; fax (847)695-0483.

Vampire Savior: World of Darkness

Capcom Coin-Op announces the release of its dynamic new CPSII title, *Vampire Savior: World of Darkness*, which was voted number one at the Japanese AOU show by both operators and players.

The game is a two-player, six button, fast-paced fighting game that provides players a new level of competition with the introduction of the "no round"system and Advancing Guard feature. In addition, Vampire offers the unique option of staying with the original character or selecting a new one when game play continuation presents itself.

There are 15 selectable characters with electrifying moves that include three levels of special energy to ensure action-packed, non-stop game play. Enhanced by the elaborate graphics and intensified sound effects, *Vampire Savior* is certain to bring all players a game experience to savor.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Capcom Coin-Op, 475 Oakmeed Pkwy., Sunnyvale, CA 94086; (408)774-0500; fax (408)774-3996.

Magnet Fever

PRIZE OUT
PRIZE OUT
MAGNET FEVER

Sammy USA, formerly known as American Sammy, debuts the newest addition to its prize dispensing game lineup, *Magnet Fever*, a bright and colorful vertical merchandise rotary.

The two-player game dispenses magnets and other prizes via a special prize tray from Sammy USA. This gives an infinite number of prize and promotional opportunities for the game, and a special Fever Chance bonus allows the player an opportunity to win additional prizes.

A Magnet Prize Kit is also available to help operators get started. *Magnet Fever* is a licensed product from Banpresto Co. Ltd. Sammy USA says watch for more prize dispensing games in the coming months.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Sammy USA, 901 Cambridge Dr., Elk Grove, IL 60007, (847)364-9787; fax (847)364-9831; Web site (http:///www.sammyusa.com).

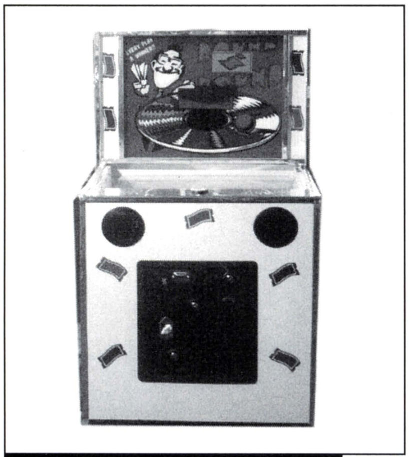
Executive Series ES25

Fun Co. Ltd. introduces the Executive Series ES25 game cabinet that includes an exclusive universal monitor mount that self centers the monitor for horizontal or vertical applications.

The monitor angle accommodates shooting as well as fighting or trackball games, and the cabinet comes with a high quality Wells-Gardner monitor. Monitor controls are positioned on the drawer for easy adjustments and hinged for simple conversions. A universal extended control panel is ideal for trackball and two-player joystick applications.

Other features include: rear door locks, a Coin Controls Over-Under Coin Door with dual coin mechs, lighted and locked marquee, solid mount leg levelers, cutaway design to eliminate side and corner damage, 200 Watt power supply, Lexan keypad cover, and standard JAMMA wiring harness. A Pentranic monitor, single coin mech with bill acceptor, handmeter, and four-player keypad are optional.

For more information, contact Fun Co. Ltd., 215 E. Bridge St., New Lisbon, WI 53950; (608)562-5558 or (800)808-5554; fax (608)562-5913.



Round 'N Round Junior Version

The popular one-player redemption game, *Round `N Round,* is now available from Astro Distributing in a smaller size to fit situations where floor space is tight. With the same fast play as the traditional game, the new *Round `N Round Junior Version* measure 30" wide x 36" deep x 51" high.

Also new at Astro is the introduction of a new progressive ticket payout option for both sizes of *Round `N Round.* This feature allows players to deposit up to four coins per play and win up to five times the ticket payout.

The progressive ticket payout option comes with an attachable header display that is designed to increase play. The option can be added to existing *Round `N Round* games as well.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Astro Distributing, P.O. Box 3442, Rock Island, IL 61204; (309)786-7066 or (800)797-7066; fax (309)786-7067; e-mail (asstroman@aol.com); Web site (http://www.astrogame.com).

Big Play

Tekbilt announces the release of *Big Play,* a giant-screen video lottery terminal. At just over 7' tall, the game is sure to attract player interest. The 33" monitor displays a single game of either an eight-line slot program or a Jacks or Better program.

The 3/4" plywood constructed cabinet is fully laminated with bright white formica on both the interior and exterior, and gold edge trim complements the full gold plated metal front door.

Features include easy access to all controls and meters, exterior menu access keys, lockable interior logic compartment, and access switches on all doors. Also available: custom software and configurations, multiple language use, international coin and currency acceptance, hoppers, cashless and online systems, and slot and player tracking systems.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Tekbilt Inc., 3983 Mann Road, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006; (215)322-3232; fax (215)322-3238 or (800)666-7776.

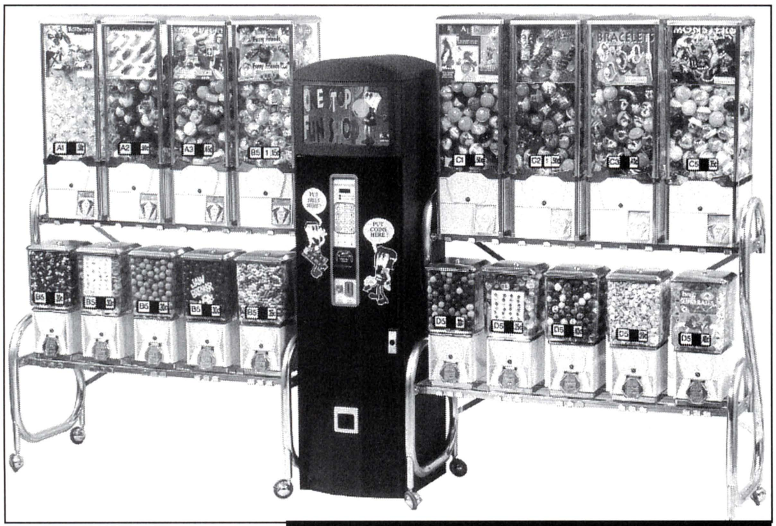
CryptoVend Card

Smart card manufacturer CardLogix announces its *CryptoVend Card* for cashless vending transactions. The card is a low-cost smart card for high-security vending where cash value is filled, stored, and spent.

Because the *CryptoCard* contains a computer chip it can store more data than conventional magnetic-stripe cards like those used for credit and ATM transactions. The chip also enables the card to process more information more securely.

The card features Symmetric Key Processing (SKP), a proven form of cryptography that authenticates users by exactly matching issuer and user keys to allow the use of the card.CardLogix enhances SKP with another cryptographic algorithm that shifts key value with each card reading for added security.

For more information, contact CardLogix, 16 Hughes, Suite 100, Irvine, CA 92618; (714)380-1312; fax (714)380-1428; e-mail (sales@cardlogix.com); Web site (http://www.cardlogix.com).

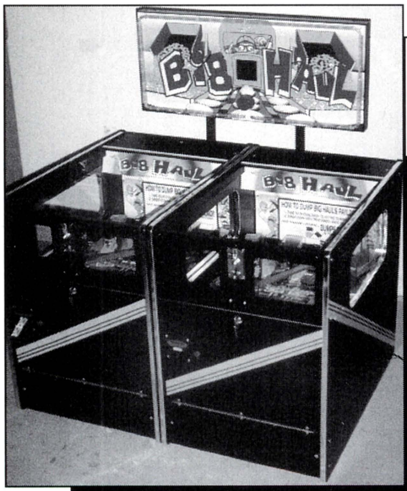


Electronic Bulk Vendor

A & A Co./Parkway Machine Corp. introduces the newest in bulk vending trends, the *Electronic Bulk Vendor* (EBV), which offers increased security, versatility, accountability, and reliability.

With the ability to accept nickels, dimes, quarters, and bills, the EBV should help increase the amount of revenue the machine will generate. Pricing can be set from a nickel to $99.95 allowing operators to control pricing and open up a whole new category of toys and products that can be vended.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact A & A Co./Parkway Machine Corp., P.O. Box 5618, Timonium, MD 21094; (410)252-1020; fax (410)252-7137; Web site (http:www.aaparkway.com).



New Big Haul Versions

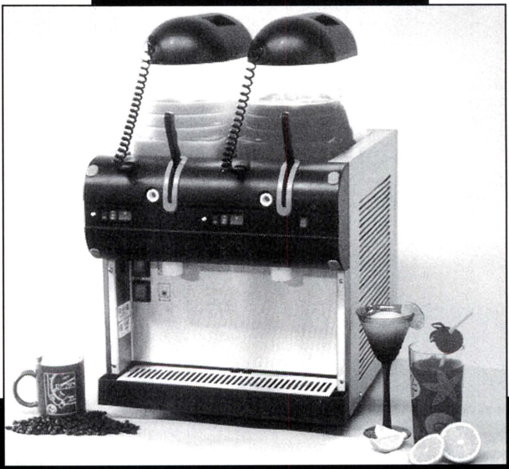
Benchmark Entertainment has released its well known redemption game *Big Haul* in two new versions, a *Limited Edition* and the *Truck Stop Model.*

The *Limited Edition* is a single player version of the current two-player game designed for locations where space is at a premium. It is only 29" wide, and contains four dump trucks on the playfield as opposed to the eight in the original game. All other features are retained.

The *Truck Stop Model* comes in one- or two-player versions. However, instead of receiving tickets the machine accumulates points. When 500 points are achieved on the digital readout, the machine will dispense one ticket. Any points remaining after the 500-point payout are carried forward as an added bonus to attract new players.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Benchmark Entertainment, 2071 N. Dixie Hwy., Pompano Beach, FL 33060; (954)781-8080 or (800)808-8860; fax (954)781-7900.

Graniteer GT-2



Frosty Factory presents its newest model, the Graniteer GT-2, a two-flavor visual merchandizer that displays moving frozen slush or granita. In addition, lighted bowls catch the customer's attention and create demand.

The unit has a powerful 3/4 H.P. compressor that produces a large number of servings per hour. With such features as a one-piece auger and electronic torque sensor, this equipment is designed for dependable performance and built to last. In only 16" of width, the Graniteer can create an interesting and diverse menu.

For more information, contact Frosty Factory, 2301 S. Farmerville St., Ruston, LA 71270; (318)255-1162 or (800)544-4071; fax (318)255-1170. ▲

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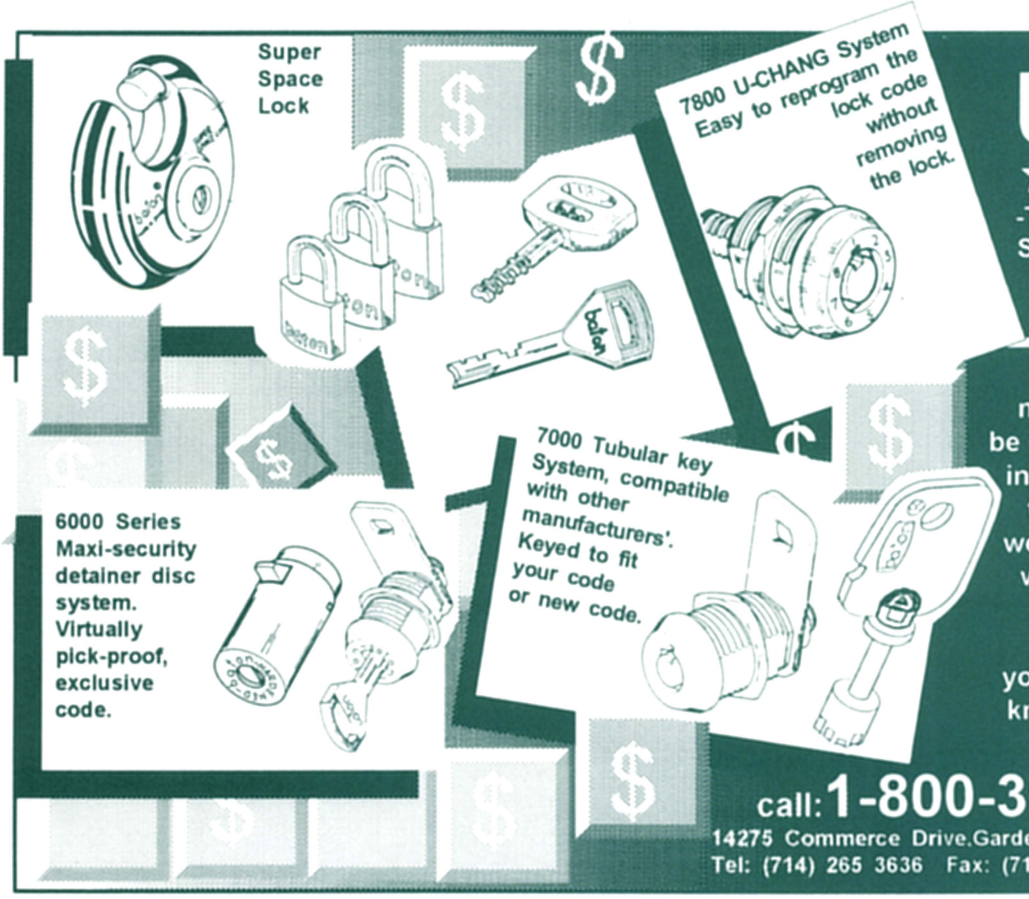

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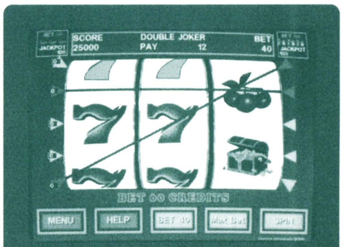
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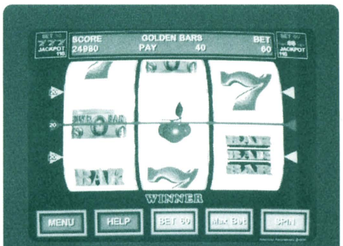
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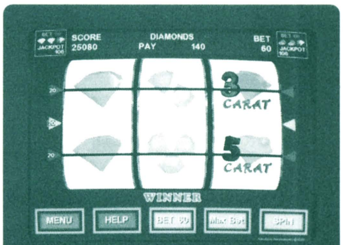
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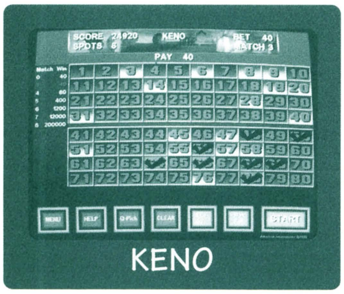
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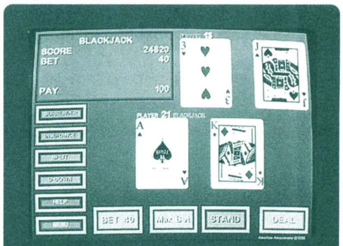
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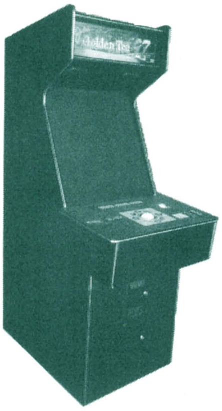

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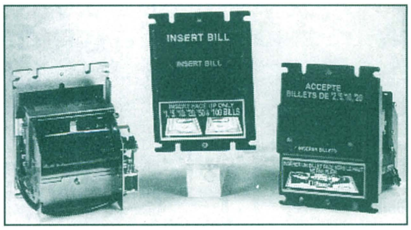

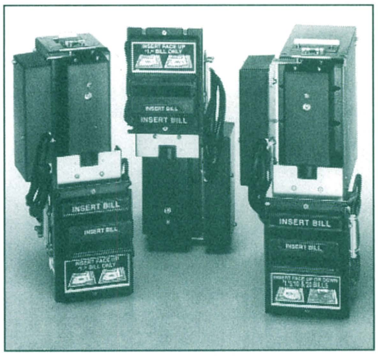

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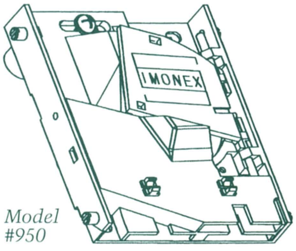

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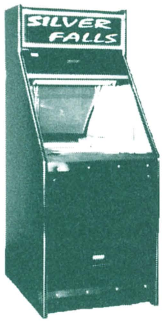

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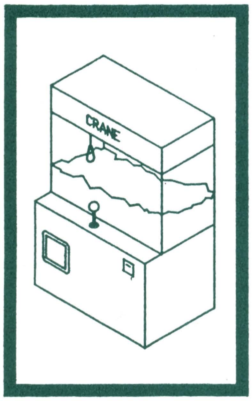

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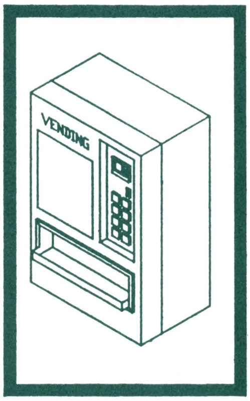

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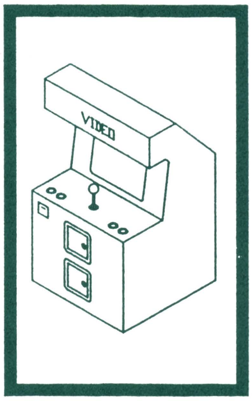

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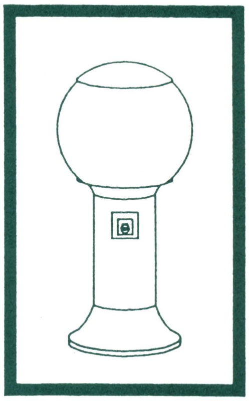

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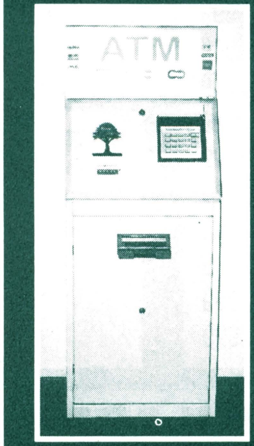

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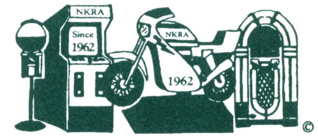

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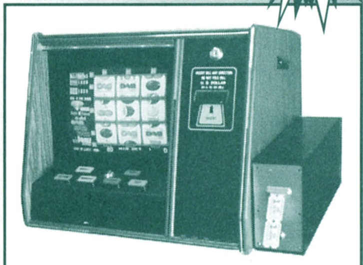

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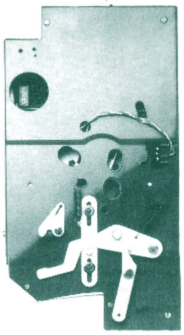

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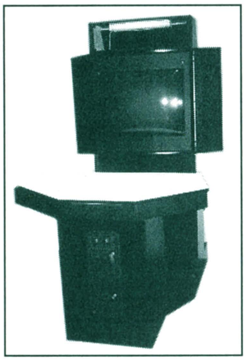

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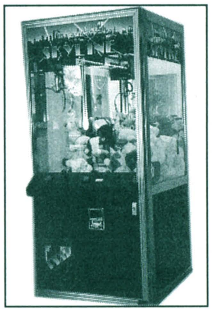

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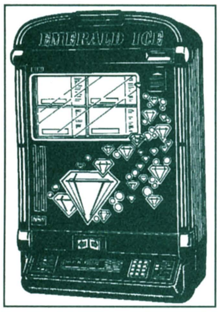

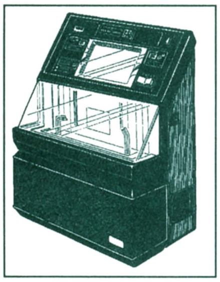

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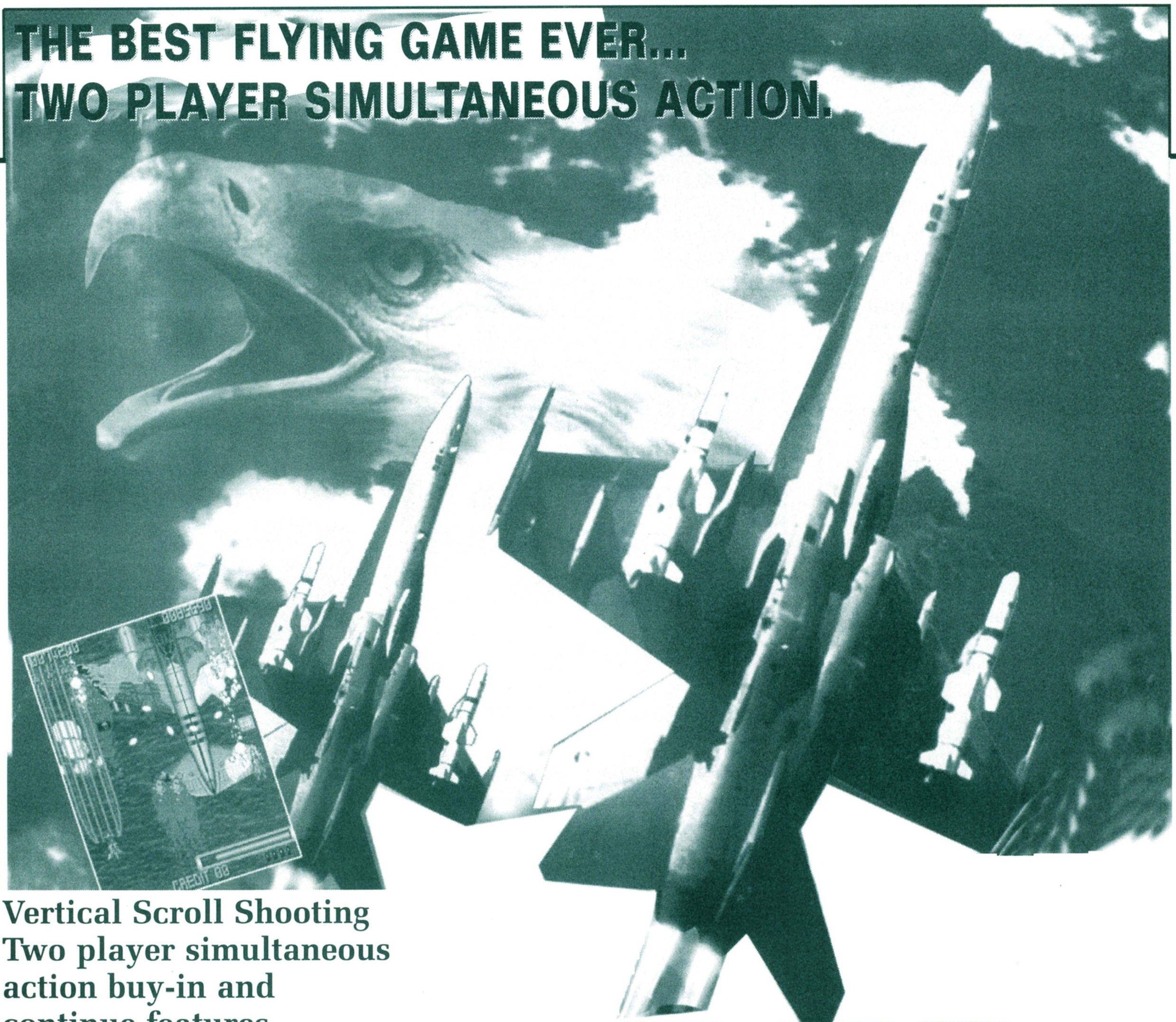

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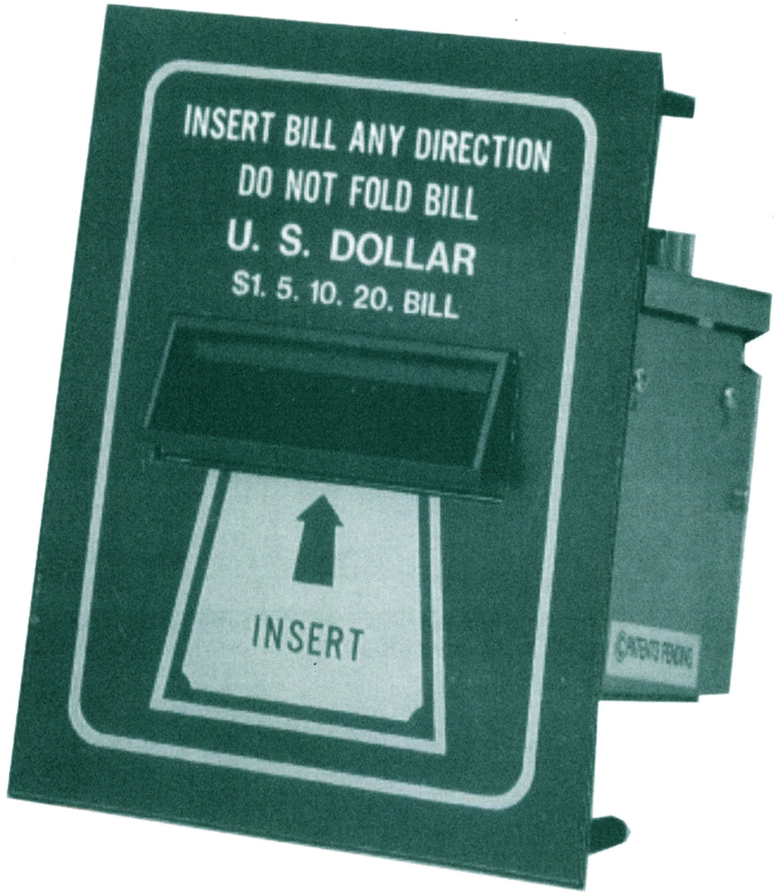

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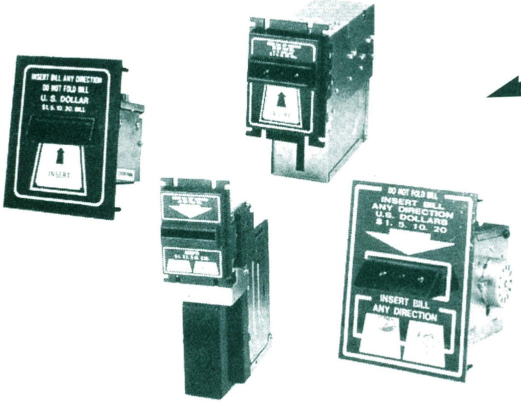

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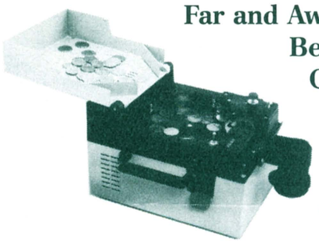

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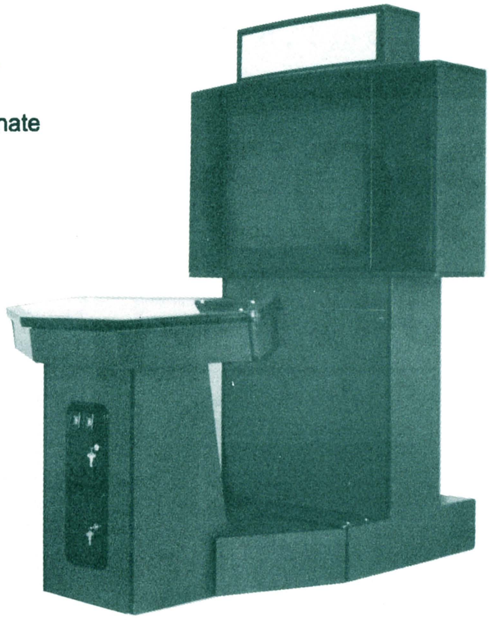

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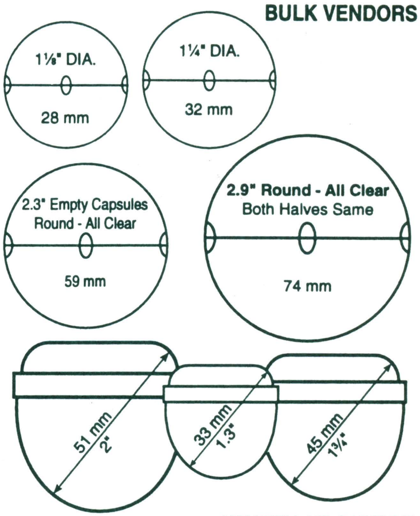
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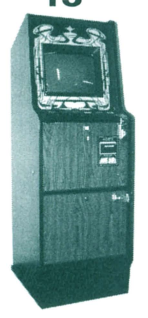

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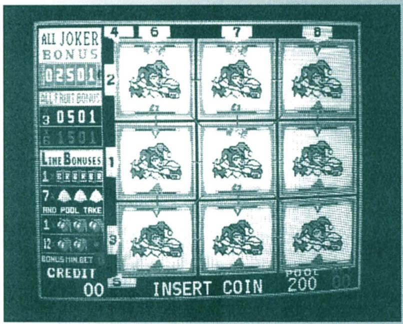
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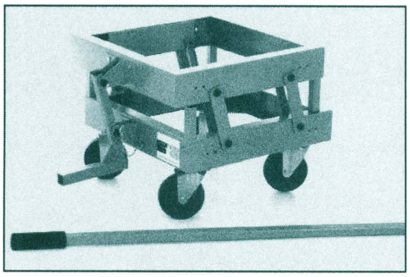

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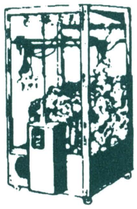

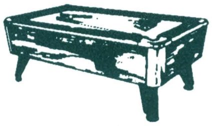

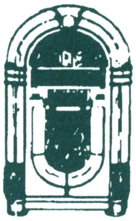

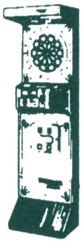

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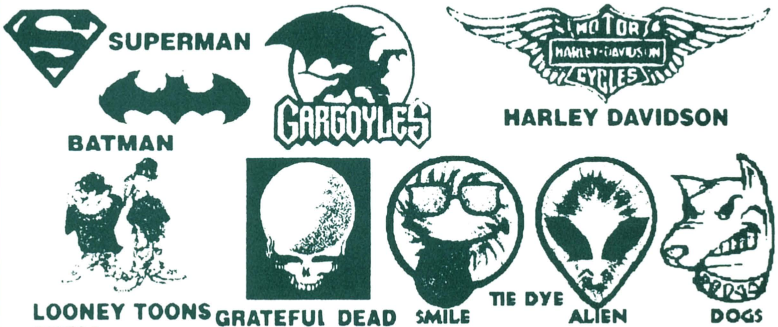
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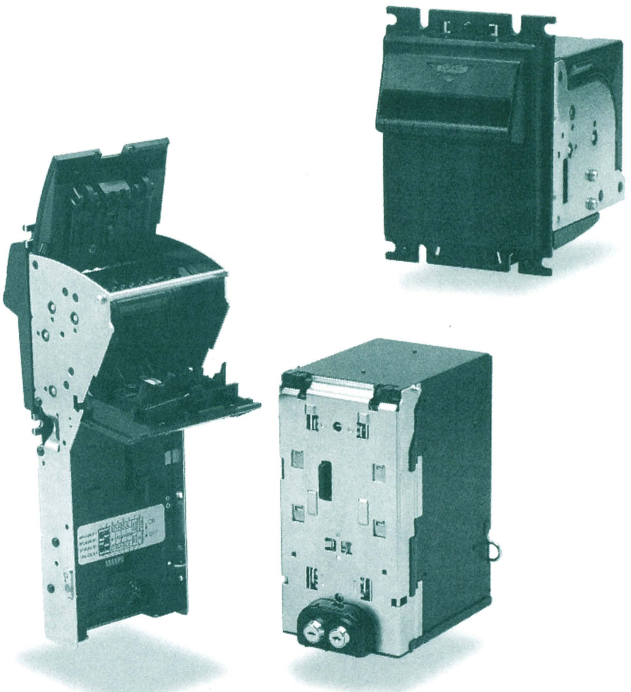

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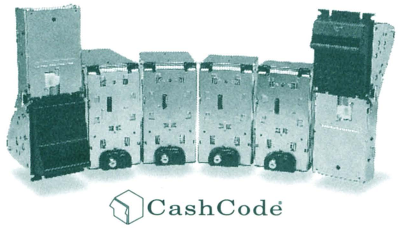

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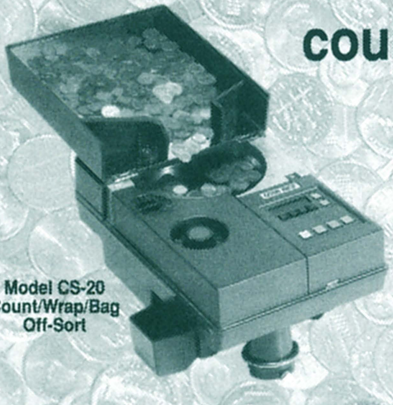

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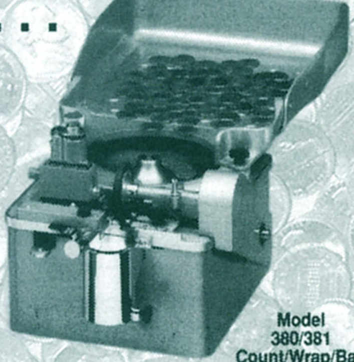

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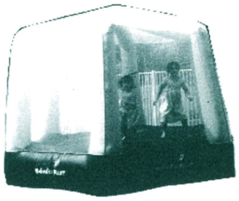

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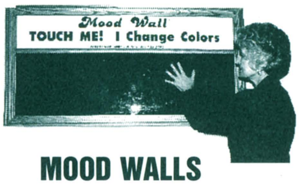

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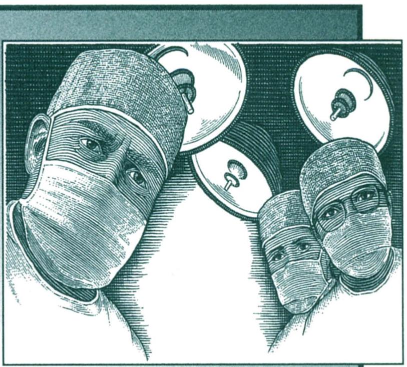

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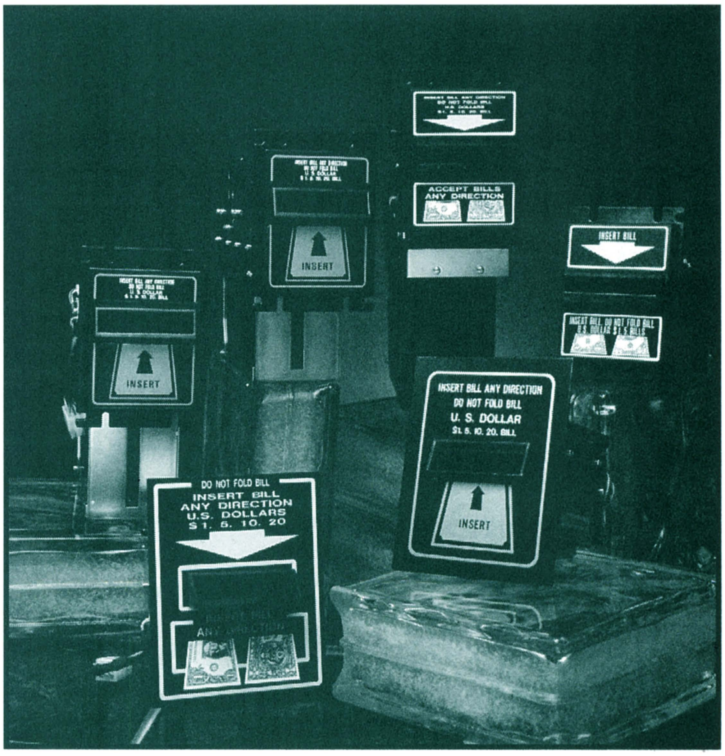
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	3	9	"Banda El Recodo"	Tributo A Juan Gabriel
	4	5	"Bronco"	La Ultima Huella
	5	--	"Ezequiel Pena"	Me Dicen El Tirador
	6	8	"Vicente Fernandez"	Y Sus Canciones
	7	--	"Grupo Limite"	Rompiendome El Alma
	8	--	"Los Tigres Del Norte"	Unidos Para Siempre
	9	4	"Los Tucanes De Tijuana"	Tucanes De Plata
	10	1	"Los Tucanes De Tijuana"	El Pachangon
TROPICAL	1	--	"Fito Olivares"	Con Amor Y Con Sabor
	2	--	"Julio Iglesias"	Tango
	3	--	"Olga Tanon"	Llevame Contigo
	4	--	"Compilation"	Hot Hits Salsa #5
	5	--	"Sonora Dinamita"	Coleccion De Oro Vol. 10
	6	6	"Jerry Rivera"	Fresco
	7	--	"Rikarena"	Sin Medir Distancia
	8	--	"Sonora Dinamita"	Super Exitos
	9	2	"Compilation"	Salsa En Calle Ocho 97
	10	4	"Compilation"	Merengon
POP	1	--	"Los Temerarios"	En Concierto Vol. 11
	2	2	"Enrique Iglesias"	Vivir
	3	3	"Marco Antonio Solis"	En Pleno Vuelo
	4	--	"Juan Gabriel & Rocio Durcal"	Juntos Otra Vez
	5	1	"Selena"	Movie Soundtrack
	6	4	"Grupo Mojado"	Sueno Y Realidad
	7	6	"Los Mismos"	Juntos Para Siempre
	8	10	"Fey"	Tierna La Noche
	9	5	"Ana Gabriel"	Vivencias
	10	7	"Shakira"	Pies Descalzos
TEJANO	1	2	"Los Angeles Azules"	Inolvidables
	2	1	"Conjunto Primavera"	Me Nacio Del Alma
	3	--	"Pete Astudillo"	Si Tu No Estas
	4	5	"La Mafia"	Un Millon De Rosas
	5	--	"Conjunto Primavera"	Sangre De Valiente
	6	3	"Michael Salgado"	Un Recuerdo Especial
	7	6	"Emilio Navario"	Quedate
	8	9	"Los Palominos"	Duele El Amor
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 11-13

7th VNEA International Junior Championships, Sioux City Convention Center, Sioux City, Iowa. Contact VNEA, (800)544-1346 or (517)893-1800; fax (517)893-0103.

August 18-20

Nightclub & Bar Expo, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. Contact Nightclub & Bar Magazine, (601)236-5510; fax (601)236-5541.

August 21-22

Ohio Coin Machine Association 23rd Anniversary Expo, Ramada University Inn & Conference Center, Columbus, Ohio. Contact David Corey or Judy Martin, (614)888-9772; fax (614)888-9767.

September 23-26

7th Fun Expo, Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact Bailey Beeken, (914)993-9200; fax (914)993-9210.

October 10-15

World Waterpark Association 17th Annual Symposium and Trade Show, San Antonio, Texas. Call (913)599-0300; fax (913)599-0520.

October 14-16

World Gaming Congress & Expo, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact International Gaming & Wagering Business, (212)594-4120, ext. 200; fax (212)714-0514.

October 16-18

National Automatic Merchandising Association National Convention and Trade Show, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. Contact NAMA, (312)346-0370; fax (312)704-4140.

October 23-25

AMOA International Expo, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Contact AMOA (312)245-1020; fax (312)245-1085.

October 28-30

Amusement Industry Expo '97, I-X Center, Cleveland, Ohio, Call (800)870-EXPO (3956); fax (216)265-2621.

October 30-November 1

AMOA-National Dart Association 4th Annual Singles & Doubles International Championships, Radisson Hotel, St. Paul, Minn. Contact Mike Smythe, (800)808-9884; fax (317)387-0999. ▲

For overseas events see "International Scene" (pg. 45).

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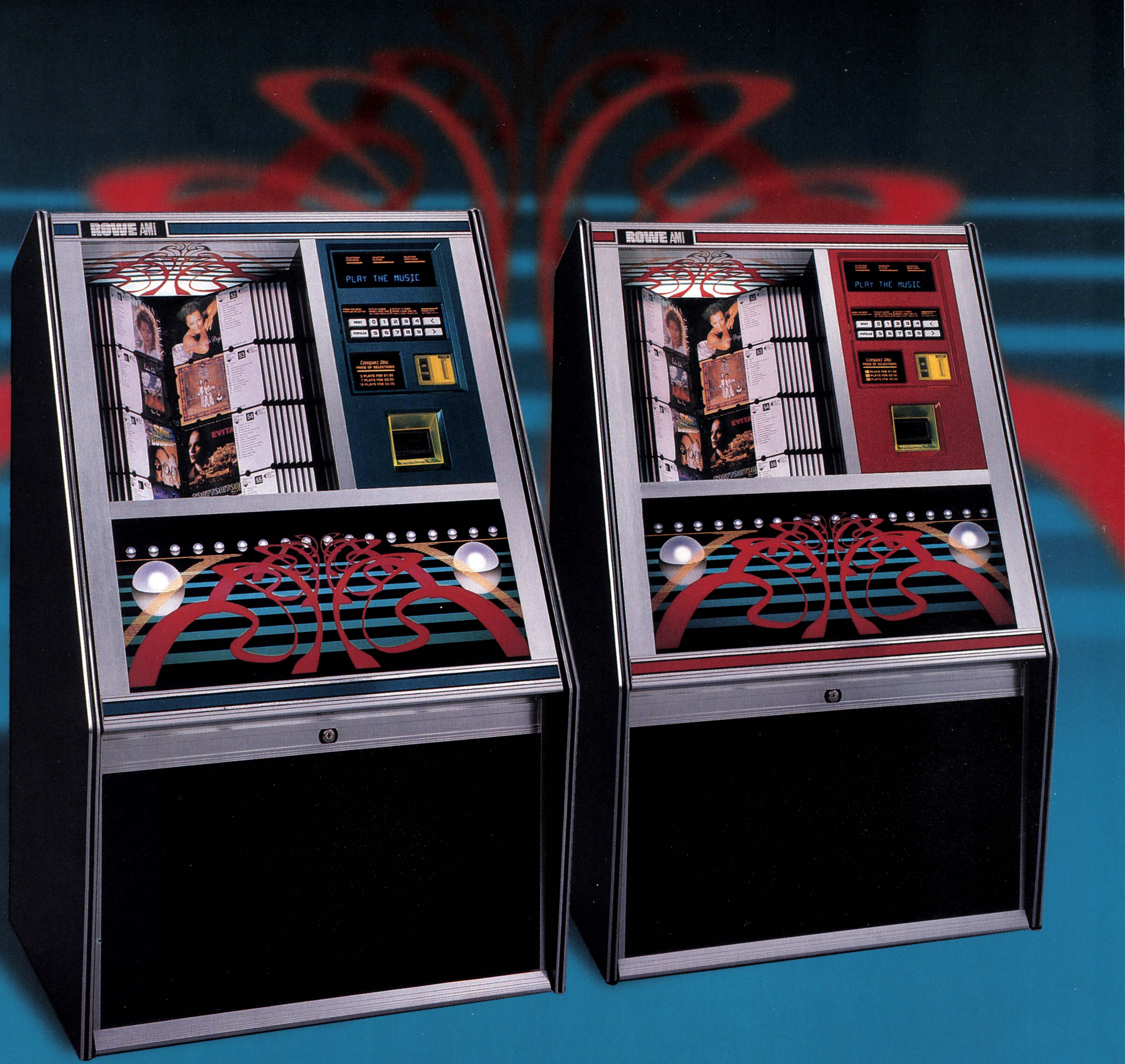

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